



Anglo-Saxon Kingship and Political Power

Rex gratia Dei

KATHRIN McCANN

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RELIGION AND CULTURE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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*Anglo-Saxon Kingship
and Political Power*

REX GRATIA DEI

KATHRIN McCANN



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SERIES EDITORS' PREFACE

Religion and Culture in the Middle Ages aims to explore the interface between medieval religion and culture, with as broad an understanding of those terms as possible. It puts to the forefront studies which engage with works that significantly contributed to the shaping of medieval culture. However, it also gives attention to studies dealing with works that reflect and highlight aspects of medieval culture that have been neglected in the past by scholars of the medieval disciplines. For example, devotional works and the practice they infer illuminate our understanding of the medieval subject and its culture in remarkable ways, while studies of the material space designed and inhabited by medieval subjects yield new evidence on the period and the people who shaped it and lived in it. In the larger field of religion and culture, we also want to explore further the roles played by women as authors, readers and owners of books, thereby defining them more precisely as actors in the cultural field. The series as a whole investigates the European Middle Ages, from c.500 to c.1500. Our aim is to explore medieval religion and culture with the tools belonging to such disciplines as, among others, art history, philosophy, theology, history, musicology, the history of medicine, and literature. In particular, we would like to promote interdisciplinary studies, as we believe strongly that our modern understanding of the term applies fascinatingly well to a cultural period marked by a less tight confinement and categorization of its disciplines than the modern period. However, our only criterion is academic excellence, with the belief that the use of a large diversity of critical tools and theoretical approaches enables a deeper understanding of medieval culture. We want the series to reflect this diversity, as we believe that, as a collection of outstanding contributions, it offers a more subtle representation of a period that is marked by paradoxes and contradictions and which necessarily reflects diversity and difference, however difficult it may sometimes have proved for medieval culture to accept these notions.

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Any project that takes years to ripen accumulates many debts. While it is often implicitly understood that there are other scholars whose work informs some new project, I should like to express my gratitude to all the medievalists who have gone before: their work inspired me, their ideas informed mine and their inquiries raised my curiosity and desire to pursue my own interests in the field of Anglo-Saxon studies.

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This work is dedicated to all of them.

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ABBREVIATIONS

(See Bibliography for full reference.)

ASC	<i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> (eds. Plummer, Rositzke, Classen and Harmer).
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
Asser	<i>Life of King Alfred</i> , cited according to chapter (ed. Stevenson, trsl. Keynes and Lapidge).
<i>Chronicon</i>	<i>Æthelweard's Chronicon</i> , cited according to book and chapter (ed. and trsl. Campbell).
Cf.	confer
CH	<i>Catholic Homilies</i> , Series I and II by Ælfric (eds. Clemoes, Godden and Pope)
CP	<i>Cura Pastoralis</i> by Gregory the Great, cited according to chapter (ed. and trsl. Sweet).
C&S	<i>Councils and Synods</i> , cited according to item number (ed. Whitelock).
EETS	Early English Text Society o.s. original series s.s. supplementary series
EHD I	<i>English Historical Documents</i> Vol. 1, cited according to item number (ed. Whitelock).
Ep.	epistle
Haddan & Stubbs	<i>Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents</i> Vol. 3 (ed. Haddan and Stubbs).
HE	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> by Bede, Roman numerals refer to the books, Arabic numerals to the chapters (ed. Plummer, trsl. McClure and Collins' ed. of Colgrave/Mynors trsl.).
<i>Life of Wilfrid</i>	<i>Life of St Wilfrid</i> , cited according to chapter (ed. Colgrave).
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica Epp. Epistolae Merowingici et Karolini aevi I LL Capit. Leges Capitularia Regum Francorum LibLite Libelli de lite imperatorum et pontificum
RGa	<i>Reallexikon der germanischen Altertumskunde</i> (revised ed.).
S	Sawyer number for charters, based on revised edition of his <i>Annotated List and Bibliography</i> (1999).
s.a.	sub anno

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TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 410** The Goths sack Rome, and the departure of the Romans leaves Britain open to attacks
- 449** *Adventus Saxonum*: King Vortigern invites brothers Hengist and Horsa to fight for him against the Picts; this leads to the arrival of Germanic tribes (Jutes, Angles and Saxons) in Britain who begin to settle there
- 597** Pope Gregory the Great sends Augustine to convert the English people to Christianity; Augustine later becomes the first archbishop of Canterbury
- 664** Council of Whitby to discuss dating of Easter: the Roman order of Christianity prevails
- 735** Bede, author of the *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (731), dies
- 757** Offa becomes King of Mercia (to 796); he consecrates his son Ecgrith king in 787
- 793** Sack of Lindisfarne; a period of sustained Viking attacks commences
- 871** Alfred becomes King of Wessex, later styled ‘the Great’
- 878** King Alfred is driven into the fens on the island of Athelney by the Vikings, but he resists and is successful at the Battle of Edington; Viking King Guthrum is baptised and the *Danelaw* established
- 886** Alfred recovers London from the Danes and is considered to be king of all the English
- 899** Alfred dies and his son Edward (‘the Elder’) succeeds to the throne
- 918** Æthelflæd, lady of the Mercians and sister of Edward, dies after ruling Mercia for eight years on her own; a year later, Edward annexes Mercia, thereby ending independent Mercian rule

- 924** Edward dies and is succeeded by his son Athelstan
- 937** Battle of Brunanburh: Athelstan and his brother Edmund defeat Scots, Strathclyde Britons and Vikings, and he takes the title of ‘*King of all Britain*’
- 939** Athelstan dies and is succeeded by his half-brother Edmund
- 946** Edmund dies and is succeeded by his younger brother Eadred; St Dunstan becomes his chief minister
- 955** Eadred dies and is succeeded by Edmund’s son Eadwig; he exiles St Dunstan in 956
- 959** Eadwig dies and Edgar, his younger brother, becomes king
- 964** Edgar expels the secular canons from the Old and New Minsters at Winchester
- 973** Edgar is consecrated king at Bath; the Council of Winchester draws up a code of practice known as *Regularis Concordia*
- 975** Edgar dies, and his first-born son Edward (later ‘the Martyr’) succeeds to the throne
- 978** Edward is martyred and his half-brother Æthelred (‘Unræd’) succeeds to the English throne; two years later, the Danes renew their attacks on England
- 991** Battle of Maldon, leading to the death of Byrhtnoth and the first tribute payments to the Vikings, but their raiding continues
- 1002** Æthelred marries Emma (‘Ælfgifu’), daughter of Duke Richard of Normandy; in the same year, he orders all Danish men who were in England to be slain – known as St Brice’s Day Massacre; Viking raids (and tribute payments – *Danegeld*) continue with Danish King Swein (‘Forkbeard’) leading many attacks
- 1013** Swein drives out Æthelred, who stays in Normandy until Swein dies in 1014; all English councillors ask Æthelred to return and he promises to be a better lord than before; Swein’s son Cnut continues to raid England
- 1016** Æthelred dies and his son Edmund (‘Ironside’) succeeds him; he is murdered shortly afterwards and Cnut becomes king of all England
- 1019** Cnut becomes king of Denmark and England; he marries Emma, Æthelred’s widow

- 1035** Cnut dies and his son Harold ('Harefoot') succeeds to the throne; Emma goes into exile in Flanders
- 1040** Harold dies and Harthacnut, Cnut's son with Emma, becomes king of England
- 1042** Harthacnut dies and Edward ('the Confessor'), son of Æthelred and Emma, becomes king of England, having been in exile in Normandy since the death of his father
- 1052** Edward founds Westminster Abbey
- 1066** Edward dies childless; his brother-in-law Harold Godwine is elected to the throne; this is challenged by Duke William of Normandy, who claims that Harold had promised the throne to him when shipwrecked in Normandy in 1064; when Harold's brother Tostig rebels and Harald Hardrada invades from Norway, Harold marches north to fight at Stamford Bridge; he is successful, but has to drive an exhausted army south to oppose William who has landed at Pevensey in the meantime; on 14 October, the English are defeated at the Battle of Hastings and Harold dies, struck down by an arrow through his eye; William is crowned King of England on Christmas Day at Westminster

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Introduction

Rumour had it that King Offa of Mercia was whispering to Charlemagne that he should depose Pope Hadrian and replace him with a Frankish ally.¹ In a letter to Charlemagne, Hadrian refers to these ‘wicked and uncongenial’ and ‘utterly false’ suggestions, and states that ‘Offa has [never] made you this exhortation at all and nothing ever came up to his heart apart from [the wish] that our fathership [continues]’.² Pope Hadrian says that he never believed these rumours, and that even if Offa were a pagan, he would not credit them because ‘the kings who came before him have always been in obedience and loyal love for the holy pontiffs who came before us’.³

Nevertheless, Hadrian was concerned enough to send two legates, bishops George of Ostia and Theophylact of Todi, to Anglo-Saxon England to inspect the state of the Church, remedy all ills, and perhaps also to sound out Offa’s attitude towards Hadrian himself. The papal legates travelled the whole country and endeavoured to visit each king. They duly drew up a list of decrees that were witnessed by King Ælfwold of Northumbria, King Offa of Mercia and the archbishops of York and Canterbury. These decrees concerned matters such as papal privileges, synodal meetings, baptism, the ordination of kings – and notably the division of powers in the secular realm:

[I]ta quoque reges et principes admonuimus, ut obediant ex corde cum magna humilitate suis Episcopis: quia illis claves coeli datæ sunt, et habent potestatem ligandi atque solvendi, [...] quia sicut reges omnibus dignitatibus præsumt, ita et Episcopi in his quæ ad Deum attinent. Ideo omnino hortamur, ut Ecclesiam Dei, quæ est sponsa Christi, omnes honorent in facto, nec injustum servitutis jugum ei imponant, nec superbiant in seculari potentia, nec alios vi opprimant[.]⁴

One can only speculate whether this decree was an answer to the rumour mentioned above. Yet there was a perceived need to reinforce apostolic powers in Anglo-Saxon England, and hence also episcopal authority, especially because the position of highest power was still contested.

Throughout the Middle Ages, king and Church often opposed each other, as neither wanted to cede authority and influence. In the early days of the Anglo-Saxon church, the king and his patronage were important for the economic survival of religious establishments. Royal land grants and freedom from the common burdens of bridge work, fortress

work and army service allowed the Church to amass a fortune and thereby to increase its independence from royal favours. This led, in turn, to a more autonomous relationship between the Church and the king. The resultant reduction of royal landed wealth and tax revenues led to the appropriation of Church lands by kings; extant petitions ask for their restoration, like this one by Pope Paul I to the Northumbrian king Eadberht (757/758):

Quod tria monasteria illi concessa fuissent a quadam abbatissa, id est, monasteria, quæ 'Staninggrave' seu 'Cuchawalda' et 'Donæmuthe' dicuntur. Quæ videlicet monasteria per vim ab eo tua abstulit excellentia, et cuidam patricio, fratri ejus, 'Moll' nomine, tribuit. De qua re nimis tristes effecti sumus, excellentissime fili, quoniam extra præceptum Dei hoc omnino egisti. Et liquet profecto, quod ad excidium animæ tuæ pertinet, dum eadem monasteria ab eo, qui in officio Divini cultus perseverat, abstulisti, et qui in hujus mundi curis desudat, concedere studuisti.⁵

This letter demonstrates two aspects of the relationship between the early Anglo-Saxon church and royal power: first, the strong monastic character of the Church with subsequent weak episcopal power, and second, the perception of monastic land as special (royal) family property.⁶ Bede, in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, describes how an increasing number of monastic establishments were being treated as seats for royal princesses and widowed queens.⁷ Royal monasteries, in particular, were often entangled in dynastic power struggles, and were at times heavily affected by shifts in the secular power balances. Money and bribery were often used to (re-)gain royal favours; if such were not to hand, religious communities were often suppressed by their secular overlords. A Frankish synod of 747 refers to such an overlord as 'robber, sacrilegious, a murderer of the poor, a devil's wolf entering the sheepfold of Christ, to be condemned with the ultimate anathema before the judgement seat of Christ'.⁸ Yet the recurrence of such proclamations against kings and nobles, as well as the number and frequency of such complaints, suggests that the alienation of Church lands was a common evil and a source of ongoing animosities between king and clergy.⁹

Not all monastic endowments were automatically exempt from the common burdens, and had to render their annual dues. Furthermore, the Church was not as protected by laws in the early Anglo-Saxon period as it would be later on. The kings of the seventh and eighth centuries thus enjoyed a far greater authority over the church than most of the extant sources indicate. The strong monastic character of the early Anglo-Saxon church meant comparatively powerless bishops, who were more involved in asserting their authority over the monastic communities than in interfering with or opposing royal politics. This episcopal weakness is expressed in Bede's long letter to Egbert, archbishop of York, in which he complains about the malpractice of secular lords who set up monasteries as tax havens:

At alii graviore adhuc flagitio, cum sint ipsi laici et nullius vitæ regularis vel usu exerciti, vel amore præditi, data regibus pecunia, emunt sibi sub prætextu monasteriorum construendorum territoria in quibus suæ liberius vacent libidini, et hæc insuper in jus sibi hæreditarium edictis regalibus faciunt ascribi, ipsas quoque literas privilegiorum suorum quasi veraciter Deo dignas, pontificum, abbatum et potestatum sæculi obtinent subscriptione confirmari. Sicque usurpatis sibi agellulis sive vicis, liberi exinde a Divino simul et humano servitio, suis tantum inibi desideriis laici monachis imperantes deserviunt [. . .] Quin etiam suis conjugibus simili impudentia

construendis, ut ipsi aiunt, monasteriis loca conquirunt, quæ pari stultitia cum sint laicæ, famularum se Christi permittunt esse rectrices. [...] provincia nostra vesano illo errore dementata est, ut nullus pene exinde præfectorum extiterit qui non huiusmodi sibi monasterium in diebus suæ præfecturæ comparaverit, suamque simul conjugem pari reatu nocivi mercatus astrinxerit: ac prævalente pessima consuetudine ministri quoque regis ac famuli idem facere sategerint; atque ita ordine perverso innumeri sint inventi, qui se abbates pariter et præfectos sive ministros aut famulos regis appellant, qui etsi aliquid vitæ monasterialis ediscere laici non experiendo sed audiendo potuerint, a persona tamen illa ac professione quæ hanc docere debeat, sunt funditus exsortes. Et quidem tales repente, ut nosti, tonsuram pro suo libitu accipiunt, suo examine de laicis non monachi, sed abbates efficiuntur.¹⁰

All these examples show that episcopal power was weak, royal power strong, and that Pope Hadrian may well have had valid reasons to fear the rumour about his impending deposition through Offa. In 786, Charlemagne had not yet been proclaimed Holy Roman Emperor, so there was no secular ruler defending or advocating the interests of the Church. Yet could a king really pose a threat to a pope? Did the Pope not rule supreme in Christendom? Did he not hold the ultimate power, to bind and to loose? The haste with which the legates were dispatched to see about the affairs of the English suggests a certain amount of trepidation lest the rumours be true, and perhaps a papal fear – who, in the late 780s, would support the Pope in a struggle with two kings?

From Filius Ecclesiae to Defensor Ecclesiae

Pope Hadrian's concerns about the (alleged) conspiracy between Offa and Charlemagne reveal the vulnerability of the pope. Petrine authority was work in progress, and its establishment and subsequent consolidation often depended on its opposite power in the earthly realm. To understand why a pope would fear a king, we need to look back and eastwards.

In 313, in Byzantium, Emperor Constantine (306–337) issued the Edict of Religious Tolerance, despite being a heathen himself until the day of his death. Christianity rose to become a state religion in 380, which brought with it an ever-increasing 'administrative' apparatus and hence a growing sense of power. Yet, initially, the two spheres of secular and religious power were not strictly divided. As *episkopos tōn ektōs*, 'bishop for those without', Constantine claimed jurisdictional authority in any external ecclesiastical affairs such as administration and organisation, while bishops were responsible for all internal matters such as Christian doctrine.¹¹ Constantine understood his authority as divinely conferred and his person as sacred, despite never having been ordained or even being perceived as priest-like.¹² This concept of divine or sacred rulership is not new – it can be traced back to Hellenic and Germanic notions of kingship – but was adapted to fit a Christian framework.¹³ The fundamental principle behind this was the universal notion that everything was traceable to some celestial will, and not due to internal merits or human efforts.¹⁴ During the seventh century, in particular, ecclesiastical concepts of rulership replaced pagan/traditional ones, and kings came to see their kingship as an office or ministry and thus as being responsible to God.¹⁵

The assumption of a quasi-sacerdotal character and the perceived divinity of the emperor opened up a new problem: divinity would allow the emperor, a secular ruler, to legislate

in ecclesiastical affairs and, in particular, to judge bishops and popes without being specifically trained in religious matters. Such boundless secular authority was, of course, irreconcilable with the Christian worldview and the Christian idea of society. Only ordained members of the Church, the clergy, were able to understand and teach the spiritual dimension of ecclesiastic affairs and work towards its realisation on earth. Any worldly ruler, being concerned only with secular business, was most unsuited to lead his people towards the Christian *telos*:

It appertains not to kings to make laws for the church. Kings have not preached the word to you, but apostles and prophets, pastors and doctors. Political welfare is the concern of kings: the ecclesiastical system is a matter for pastors and doctors. I cannot be persuaded that the church is governed by imperial edicts.¹⁶

The divinity of the ruler was thus necessarily modified into a divine appointment, although it took many more efforts to restrain secular rulers from judging in ecclesiastical affairs.

Across the Aegean Sea, Rome was slowly recovering from its depredation and re-establishing itself as prime city. Its imperial seat was soon filled with a pope whose foremost concern was to establish Rome as the seat of the Church, the corporate body of all Christians:

Et ego dico tibi, quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam, et portæ inferi non prævalebunt adversum eam. Et tibi dabo claves regni cælorum. Et quodcumque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in cælis: et quodcumque solveris super terram, erit solutum et in cælis.¹⁷

Promoting Rome as seat of the universal Church, in opposition to the growing strength of the patriarch of Constantinople, had one main consequence with repercussions throughout the ages: as occupant of the highest seat the pope possessed the highest power, and thus all earthly power was subjected to him. This establishment of papal primacy, in combination with clerical superiority, necessitated a new conception of secular rulership. Pronouncing emperors as being within the church, not above it – as *fili ecclesiae*¹⁸ – marked the first instance of the liberation of the Church from imperial dominion; and it can also be seen as the first move of subjecting secular power to religious authority.

Pope Leo I developed a doctrine that firmly anchored papal primacy in Roman law: as heir to the powers of St Peter, the pope directly possesses Christ's powers. The pope was, therefore, not only outside but also above the Church, and so the only one functionally qualified to rule the Christian world.¹⁹ This was further developed by Pope Gelasius I when in 494 he wrote to Emperor Anastasius I:

Duo sunt quippe, imperator auguste, quibus principaliter mundus hic regitur, auctoritas sacra pontificium et regalis potestas, in quibus tanto gravius pondus est sacerdotum, quanto etiam pro ipsis regibus hominum in divino reddituri sunt examine rationem. Nosti etenim, fili clementissime, quoniam licet praesedeas humano generi dignitate, rerum tarnen praesulibus divinarum devotus colla submittis atque ab eis causas tuae salutis expetis, inque sumendis caelestibus sacramentis eisque, ut competit, disponendis subdi te debere cognoscis religionis ordine potius quam praesese. Nosti itaque inter hæc ex illorum te pendere iudicio, non illos ad tuam redigi possi voluntatem.

Si enim quantum ad ordinem publicae pertinet disciplinae, cognoscentes imperium tibi superna dispositione conlatum legibus tuis ipsi quoque parent religionis antistites, ne vel in rebus mundanis exclusae videantur obviare sententiae, quo, oro te, decet affectu eis et convenit oboedire, qui praerogandis venerabilibus sunt attributi mysteriis?²⁰

This famous quote voices for the first time the superiority of one domain over the other. Within the Christian worldview, all action is ultimately directed towards attaining the Kingdom of Heaven, so it is only right that those who are the teachers of the faith, and thus responsible for spiritual welfare, should be ranked higher than those who are only concerned with earthly and hence temporal matters. Here, Gelasius skilfully manages to undermine the emperor's power by subjecting him to clerical pronouncements. Even more, his reference to the emperor being *permitted* to rule already gestures towards the divine appointment of kings, a thought that would be developed in years to come.

Gelasius' letter challenged the imperial legal position, stating that it was the clergy who defined the boundaries of ecclesiastical and thereby secular law.²¹ It is no wonder, then, that this view was highly contested by the imperial court. Emperor Justinian I (527–565) rejected the Gelasian statement by claiming that the emperor unites in himself the supreme temporal and spiritual power.²² True, both powers derive directly from God, but it is the imperial duty to ensure the moral and doctrinal well-being of the clergy, says Justinian:

Maxima quidem in hominibus sunt dona dei a superna collata clementia sacerdotium et imperium, illud quidam divinis ministrans, hoc autem humanis praesidens ac diligentiam exhibens; ex uno eodemque principio utraque procedentia humanam exornant vitam [. . .] Nam si hoc quidem inculpabile sit undique et apud deum fiducia plenum, imperium autem recte et competenter exornet traditam sibi rempublicam, erit consonantia quaedam bona, omne quicquid utile est humano conferens generi. Nos igitur maximam habemus sollicitudinem circa vera dei dogmata et circa sacerdotum honestatem.²³

By giving the emperor the authority to supervise the clergy, Justinian not only elevates the imperial position above the episcopate but at the same time demotes the pope to a mere puppet.

Differing interpretations of the type of power and authority held by secular and religious rulers complicated the matter still further: the secular ruler only possesses executive *potestas* whereas the pope possesses the supreme power of binding and loosing.²⁴ *Potestas* too was divinely conferred but, unlike the papal *auctoritas*, it was a divine *beneficium* for which the episcopate had to render account.²⁵ Thus, the clergy needed to keep careful watch over the ruler's exercise of powers and, if necessary, guide or admonish him. In this context, Gelasius' maxim of the two powers served as means to turn 'the imperial argument of divine derivation of imperial powers into an argument with which to establish control over the emperor'.²⁶

The establishment of papal primacy and the pope's claim to the title of 'universal patriarch' led to a clash with the Eastern patriarch in Constantinople, culminating in an open enmity between East and West. In Byzantium, Emperor Justinian II (685–695 and 705–711) understood himself as autocratic ruler and would thus not allow any papal interference. The pope, however, insisted on his authority in regard to doctrine and the

sacerdotium.²⁷ Tensions increased until Pope Gregory II (715–731) openly denied any Eastern imperial jurisdiction over the pope and thus the Western half of the church.²⁸

The break from the Byzantine Empire necessitated finding a secular ruler who would take over the imperial rule in Italy and act as defender and protector of the Western church which was so urgently required. It was here that the rulers of the Frankish kingdom entered the greater political stage. The Merovingian royal house had lost importance and influence over the years; the real power lay with the mayors of the palace. Pippin III (the Short; 751–768) deposed the last Merovingian king Childerich III in 751, who by then had become a mere figurehead. Pope Zacharias (741–752) sanctioned the deposition, and his successor, Pope Stephen II (752–757), journeyed to Pippin to anoint him as king,²⁹ and in addition to make him a *patricius Romanorum*: he was now an officer of the Romans and so officially installed to defend and protect them.³⁰

Pippin, and the kings after him, embodied a new status, a new purpose of being. Rulership existed for a divinely willed end and the king's role was that of Christian service for the well-being of his people.³¹ His primary task was to eradicate evil and in so doing to assist the pope.³² Isidore of Seville expresses this duty of the prince most clearly:

Principes saeculi non numquam intra ecclesiam potestatis adeptae culmina tenent, ut per eandem potestatem disciplinam ecclesiasticam muniant. Ceterum intra ecclesiam potestates necessariae non essent, nisi ut, quod non praevallet sacerdos efficere per doctrinae sermonem, potestas hoc impleat per disciplinae terrorem. Saepe per regnum terrenum coeleste regnum proficit[.]³³

As *defensor ecclesiae*, the purpose of the secular ruler is to exercise terror to achieve what the priest cannot when only using words. In fulfilling this obligation, the ruler proves himself useful, a quality that should become a necessary characteristic of rulership.³⁴ Yet it was part of the authority of the pope to pronounce on what was evil, and hence to order the prince to eradicate it. The prince was thus no longer strictly autonomous but dependent on the pope, a fact that would have repercussions on the regnal/papal relationship throughout the Middle Ages.³⁵

Emancipated Kings or Bishops' Bailiffs?

The coronation of Pippin was the first step in creating a secular protector for the Church. As Pope Hadrian's letter shows, this was not enough to make the papacy invincible against any attacks from worldly rulers, nor the pope's position strong enough to rule without considering any secular leader. Despite being at the edge of the world, Offa had risen from humble beginnings to mighty king, so much so that Hadrian in far-away Italy trembled. Offa's reputation and connections extended beyond his kingdom, as is evidenced by his contact with Charlemagne and the various ways one sought to emulate the other.³⁶ Yet while pope and king might have had their disagreements, it was kings and bishops who were often at loggerheads.

King Offa's ambition to increase the reach of Mercian dominion had implications for the archbishopric of Canterbury.³⁷ His policy of re-granting lands, thereby rendering former grants invalid, and alienating Church lands for his own use, drove a wedge between him and the archbishop of Canterbury, Jænberht,³⁸ alienating him further when he wished

to crown his son Ecgfrith (following the model of the Frankish kings who regularly crowned their sons during the father's lifetime).³⁹ The result of all these troubles was that Offa decided to create a second Southumbrian archbishopric and install a Mercian-friendly prelate (Hygeberht, former bishop of Lichfield) to gain better control over the Canterbury see and its occupant.⁴⁰ Indeed, Hygeberht (as well as Jænberht's successor Æthelheard) worked closely with the Mercian king, and all strife was laid to rest. With Offa's death, however, this delicate balance between powers crumbled, and the dispute flared up again under King Coenwulf of Mercia and Archbishop Wulfred of Canterbury. During its short existence, the authority of the archbishopric of Lichfield was rather weak and, by the end of the eighth century, Hygeberht had already lost effective control over his subordinates.⁴¹ To rectify the situation, Coenwulf wrote to Pope Leo III:

Cujus itaque, sicut vos scitis, dignitatis honorem primum Rex Offa, propter inimicitiam cum venerabili Janberto et gente Cantuariorum acceptam, avertere, et in duas parochias dissipare, nisus; et piissimus coepiscopus et antecessor vester Adrianus, rogatu prædicti regis, facere coepit quod prius nemo præsumpsit, et Merciorum præsulem pallio extulit. [. . .] Sed tamen excellentiam vestram humiles exoramus, [. . .] ut ut super hac causa cum sapientibus vestris quæretis, et quicquid vobis videatur, nobis postea servandum, rescribere dignemini[.]⁴²

This passage can be understood in two ways. Firstly, it can be seen as an attempt at self-promotion: as the new Mercian king, Coenwulf might have wanted to ingratiate himself with the alienated clergy of Offa's unruly province by resolving this contested issue. Secondly, he implies here that Offa only established the Lichfield archbishopric to offend and insult the Kentish people and the archbishop of Canterbury. While Coenwulf thus avoids any suspicion of simony during archiepiscopal elections, he also acknowledges that Offa's power in Kent could only be sustained by creating a compliant religious head. Somewhat surprisingly, Pope Leo III does not offer any real solution to the problem, but only states that Pope Hadrian I confirmed the division thinking that this was the unanimous wish of king and country.⁴³ Since Leo was reluctant to contradict and annul a prior papal decision, Lichfield had to be abolished through the 'backdoor': out of reverence to St Augustine the primacy was held at Canterbury,⁴⁴ and when Æthelheard travelled to Rome in 801–802 to discuss this matter in person, he obtained a privilege from the pope re-establishing all the rights of Canterbury, and thereby withdrawing any justification of the existence of the Lichfield archbishopric.⁴⁵ In a subsequent synod at *Clofesho* in 803, Æthelheard then formally abolished the disputed see.⁴⁶

Offa's attempt to control the Church did not succeed beyond his death. At the height of his power, he was able to overrule the Anglo-Saxon clergy and institute a new archbishopric without much resistance, and to draw a pope into his dealings. The creation of the see was never directly interpreted as an expression of royal supremacy over the clergy; likewise, its abolishment was never directly interpreted as restraining such royal power. The players in this drama wanted this to be seen as neither a royal assertion over the clergy nor an episcopal curtailing of royal powers. Instead, Offa did it to alienate the Kentish people, as Coenwulf asserts, using indirect practices, as Æthelheard states. Neither acknowledges any wrongful enforcement of royal power. Similarly, the assertion of the Canterbury primacy only refers to the archbishop's undivided supreme power over bishoprics and the clergy but not over the king. Still, no king would ever assume such

supremacy over the archbishop of Canterbury again; and so the fragile balance between secular and episcopal power had been restored.

These struggles between kings and bishops may well have been the backdrop which provoked the pope into resurrecting the former post of Holy Roman Emperor, but with the express new function of 'protector of the Church'. Charlemagne was the most suitable candidate, and despite being hesitant about this honour,⁴⁷ he was crowned Holy Roman Emperor on Christmas Day 800. With this final stage in the transformation of the secular ruler into the defender of the Church, the relationship between popes and kings/emperors began to be seen as an alliance between the Christian and secular power: the king defends the realm externally by military force and the popes defend it internally by intercession with God. In the relationship between the two, however, popes claimed superiority of the Church over any temporal government: they bore responsibility over all Christians, and so the pope was set above everyone else as a divinely instituted ruler over the whole Christian world.⁴⁸

Within these overall efforts to delineate the two spheres of power, it was important for secular rulers to understand where their power lay within a Christian kingdom. Like the Byzantine emperors, Western kings saw it as their duty to supervise the clergy, but the ninth century witnessed the advance of the bipartite division of powers between episcopate and king: the episcopate's share in the royal ministry was contained in their Christian way of living and teaching the Christian doctrine.⁴⁹ Furthermore, *ecclesia* was interpreted as a *corpus* with Christ as its head and as being divided into an ecclesiastical and a royal person.⁵⁰ There are then two powers, the *auctoritas sacrata pontificum* and the *regalis potestas*, but 'in ecclesia nemo pontifice potior et in seculo Christiano imperatore nemo celsior invenitur'.⁵¹ In contrast: 'The King [...] is a minister of God; that is, he has been established by God for your benefit, by terror and assistance to guard and protect you, lest you be killed by your enemy and lest others snatch away your property.'⁵² The king, therefore, is not autonomous but must orientate his rulership towards the benefit of his society: he must fulfil the divine will which is only known to the clergy. The clergy is thus placed above the king.⁵³

To fulfil this social duty, a ruler was called upon to ensure that justice prevailed. This very fact is anchored in his title, *rex*, as Isidore of Seville explains in his *Etymologiae*:

Regnum a regibus dictum. Nam sicut reges a regendo vocati, ita regnum a regibus. [...] Reges a regendo vocati. [...] Non autem regit, qui non corrigit. Recte igitur faciendo regis nomen tenetur, peccando amittitur. Unde et apud veteres tale erat proverbium: 'Rex eris, si recte facias: si non facias, non eris.'⁵⁴

Royal blood alone does not constitute a king. If a king governs justly, behaves virtuously and thereby serves Christian society, he can demand loyalty, even from the clergy, for as long as he satisfactorily fulfils the tasks of his office.⁵⁵ Should he cease to govern well, the clergy, and especially the pope, have every right to intervene and even depose the king.⁵⁶ However, over time, bad rulership was interpreted as punishment for the sinful conduct of a people. Resistance against, or even deposition of, a bad king was thus rendered illegitimate since even the powers of a useless king were God-given.

But how would a king know how to rule correctly? Paganism was still rife and even kings wavered in their beliefs. To be a Christian ruler, the king had to be taught Christian

conduct, and to be able to govern as a Christian king (that is, to defend and protect the Church), the ruler had to be told what needed to be done to fulfil these tasks. There were, of course, no other interpreters of divine will than the clergy, and so they were the only ones able to guide rulers. The episcopate established itself as mediator between the divine will and the secular recipient of this will, most notably with the introduction of religious coronation and consecration rites. Since bishops thus instituted kings, they had the means to dispose them.⁵⁷

An interesting episode in 871 illustrates how this delicate balance of powers could easily be upset over the important issue of land. When Bishop Hincmar of Laon (nephew and erstwhile protégé of Hincmar of Rheims) was deposed, his lands reverted back to the royal fisc because, according to the royal position, the lands granted to a bishop were forfeited once this bishop was deposed.⁵⁸ From the pope's and bishop's position, however, the see was only temporally vacant until the argument was resolved, and hence the lands should remain in episcopal possession. When Pope Hadrian II forbade any disposition of the diocesan lands and asked the king not to interfere,⁵⁹ Charles the Bald replied:

[Q]uibus referimus, quia ut beatus dicit Gregorius, non reges Francorum ex regio genere progeniti, non episcoporum vicedomini, sed terræ domini hactenus fuimus computati: et ut Leo ac Byturicensis synodus scripsit: Reges et imperatores, quos terris divina potentia præesse præcepit, jus distinguendorum negotiorum episcopis sanctis juxta divalia constituta permiserunt, non autem episcoporum villici exstiterunt. Et Augustinus dicit: Per jura regum possidentur possessiones, not autem per episcopale imperium, reges villarum fiunt actores.⁶⁰

Whatever is to happen to any land within the kingdom, pertains to the king alone and any external interference is a challenge to royal power. Although granted to a diocese, the king retains ultimate possession over ecclesiastical property. Furthermore, Charles the Bald insists on his jurisdiction over bishops, stating that as 'walk[ing] in the image of God, [. . .] raised up [. . .] by God's grace, in the title and dignity of a king; and [. . .] trained up from childhood in sacred letters and in both ecclesiastical and secular law', he had gained every right to a superior status.⁶¹ The ecclesiastical maxim, that only someone trained in ecclesiastical law can judge the clergy, is here twisted around to the king's advantage. He fulfils the condition, canonical knowledge, and is thus in the legitimate position to depose a bishop for crimes against the state and reclaim his ecclesiastical lands. With this assertion of royal authority, Charles the Bald demonstrated his intentions as sovereign monarch: he would not be the pope's puppet, but an independent-minded emperor.⁶²

Conclusion

Early medieval rulership is often termed a theocracy. Theocracy implies a religious legitimation of rulership only, and although kings increasingly insisted on the divine sanction of their rule, features of their Germanic (or in the cases of Byzantine emperors their Classical) heritage cannot be denied. Hierocracy, on the other hand, implies a purely religious hegemony, and although the episcopate strongly advocated this form of government, it was not (yet) political reality. Instead, there are mixed forms of both: theocratic and hierocratic elements are interwoven as the struggle for supremacy continues.

Imposing religious supremacy was a slow and difficult process. Governments existed before the rise of Christianity; but the extent to which there were sovereign kings is another question. Over time, the papacy and the episcopate managed to graft their idea of a Christian kingdom onto the existing secular ones, thus changing hierarchies and authorities. The most important change was the origin of power. Although ideas of a divine intervention of some sort existed before Christianity, it was the concept of a God-given kingship that would have the greatest influence on medieval government. God-given kingship encapsulates many more aspects than divine legitimisation: a 'co-rule' between king and episcopate; Christian morals in government; the image of an ideal ruler; and the transformation of a mere man into a king.

As theocratic king, the royal ruler appears to be elevated above everyone else; not subjected to any secular law, but rather reigning as an almost absolute sovereign by claiming divine grace as source of his power. In practice, however, the king was limited in his sovereign power by the very elements that constituted his rulership, and which the kings were so eager to emphasise. Their appeal to divine grace, their insistence on a kingship derived from God, placed them above the temporal law, but simultaneously subjected them to divine law. The promulgation of divine law, its interpretation and its assertion, fell to the clergy and opened up a way to interfere directly and legitimately with royal rule. The king was now subjected to a set of laws that he did not proclaim and that he was unable to change; in fact, he was in the same position with regard to the pope as his regnal subjects were to him. Likewise, royal subjection to divine law provided the clergy with a forceful argument for the inapplicability of the king's jurisdiction in ecclesiastical affairs. Since the episcopate also managed to set themselves between king and God during the process of anointing, they elevated themselves above the king.⁶³ They reasoned that the consecrators of kings cannot be his subjects at the same time, for an inferior subject could not sit in judgement over a superior one.⁶⁴ Crucial in this struggle was the new concept of kingship as God-given and the king's insistence upon it. To consolidate and legitimise their power, kings called upon God to affirm their right rule. This meant, however, that they allowed the clergy to be set above them. Royal rule, as it emerged in the ninth century, was a combination of political authority and Godly grace. King and pope acted in union in the wider administration of the Christian Empire, but also separately in their respective domains. How fragile this relationship could be has been seen in the examples of Offa's attempts to create a new archbishopric, the rumour of the deposition of the pope, and the royal victory over papal interference in a property dispute. From here, ultimate superiority was not achieved by (military) struggle, but by turning kings into vicars of Christ.

Notes

¹ The rumour is referred to in a letter by Pope Hadrian I to Charlemagne (Ep. 92, MGH Epp.); see also Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984), pp. 117ff.

² Ep. 92 (MGH Epp.): 'quod valde nefandissimum ac contrarium in oculis vestris apparuit scriptum; et hoc omnino falsum esse a vestra excellentia pro certissimae dinoscitur, quia nec ipse Offa hanc hortationem minime vobis fecit et nullatenus in corde aliter ascendit, nisi ut paternitas nostra per Dei misericordiam eius temporibus sanctam Dei ecclesiam regere et gubernare valeat, ad profectum videlicet omnium christianorum'.

- ³ Ep. 92 (MGH Epp.): ‘a predecessoribus suis regibus semper subiecti in oboedientia atque fideli amore sanctis predecessoribus nostris pontificibus et nobis existentes’.
- ⁴ Haddan & Stubbs, pp. 447–462, here pp. 453f: ‘[S]o we have also admonished kings and princes, that they from the heart with great humility obey their bishops, because the kingdom of heaven is committed to them, and they have the power of binding and loosing, [. . .] For as kings are above all dignities, so are bishops in things pertaining to God. Therefore we exhort with all earnestness that all do indeed honour the Church of God, which is the spouse of Christ; and not put her an unrighteous yoke of servitude, nor wax proud with secular power, nor oppress others with violence’ (trsl. John Johnson, *A Collection of the Laws and Canons of the Church of England from its First Foundation to the Conquest, and From the Conquest to the Reign of King Henry VIII. Vol. I* [Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1850], pp. 271–273). See Catherine Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c.650–850* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), ch. 6 for a full analysis of the Legatine councils.
- ⁵ Haddan & Stubbs, pp. 394–396: ‘[T]hree monasteries had been granted to him [Abbot Forhtred] by a certain abbess, namely the monasteries which are called Stonegrave and Coxwold and *Donaemuthe*; and that your Excellency took these monasteries from him by force and gave them to a certain “patrician”, his brother, Moll by name. We were greatly saddened by this affair, O most excellent son, since you have done this entirely against the precept of God. And surely it is obvious that it pertains to the ruin of your soul, to have taken away the said monasteries from him who discharges the office of the divine worship, and to have been eager to grant them to him who toils in the cares of the world’ (trsl. EHD I no. 184). Moll may refer to Æthelwold Moll who became king in 759.
- ⁶ John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 81f.
- ⁷ Although their primary function was to create political alliances by marrying ‘foreign’ kings and producing heirs, those royal women who chose the veil instead still retained a strong political force (for royal women, see chapter 3). One also ought not to forget that kings were interested in acquiring monasteries that were strategically well placed. Offa, for example, had a vested interest in obtaining control over the monastery at Bath as it allowed him to bring the border regions further into royal control (Susan E. Kelly [ed.], *Charters of Bath and Wells. Anglo-Saxon Charters 13* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007], p. 7).
- ⁸ Haddan & Stubbs, pp. 376–383, here p. 381: ‘raptorem et sacrilegum et homicidam pauperum et lupum diaboli intrantem in ovile Christi, et maximo anathematis vinculo dampnandum ante tribunal Christi’ (trsl. Ephraim Emerton, *The Letters of St Boniface* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1940], no. 52 Boniface to Archbishop Cuthbert of Canterbury).
- ⁹ Religious establishments were also subject to the vagaries of their time, to new laws and customs, duties and other obligations to their superiors. See, for example, the letter by Abbess Eangyth and her daughter Heaburg (Bugga) to Boniface (Ep 16) in which they complain about their poverty and the obligations to king, queen and bishop. The king appears particularly unforgiving and seems to base his dues on jealous rumours. A similar complaint is made by Bishop Lul in his letter to Æthelberht, archbishop of York (see EHD I no. 188 and Haddan & Stubbs, pp. 435f).
- ¹⁰ Haddan & Stubbs, pp. 314–325, here pp. 320f: ‘But others by a still heavier crime, since they are laymen and not experienced in the usages of the life according to the rule or possessed by love of it, give money to kings, and under the pretext of founding monasteries buy lands on which they may more freely devote themselves to lust, and in addition cause them to be ascribed to them in hereditary right by royal edicts, and even get those same documents of their privileges confirmed, as if in truth worthy of God, by the subscription of bishops, abbots and secular persons. And thus, having usurped for themselves estates and villages, and being henceforward free from divine as well as from human service, they gratify their own desires alone, laymen in charge of monks; [. . .] Moreover, with like shamelessness they procure for their wives places for constructing monasteries – as they say – and these with equal foolishness, seeing that they are lay-women, allow themselves to be mistresses of the handmaids of Christ. [. . .] our province has been demented with that mad error, so that there has hardly been one of the reeves since then who has not procured for himself during his time of office a monastery of this kind and involved his wife with him in

the guilt of this hateful traffic; and with the prevalence of this worst of customs, the king's thegns and servants also have exerted themselves to do the same; and thus by a perverse state of affairs, numberless people have been found who call themselves abbots and at the same time reeves or thegns or servants of the king, and who, although as laymen they could have learnt something of the monastic life, not by experience but by hearsay, are yet absolutely without the character and profession which should teach it. And indeed, as you know, such persons suddenly receive the tonsure, and at their own judgment are made from laymen not into monks, but abbots' (trsl. EHD I no. 170).

- 11 Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought, 300–1450* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) p. 5. It is, however, not clear whether 'without' refers to pagans as those outside the Church or to Constantine being bishop of all external affairs. Cf. D. M. Nicol, 'Byzantine Political Thought', p. 70, in J. H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, c.350–c.1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 51–79.
- 12 Ordination would have excluded him from the imperial office (Nicol, *Byzantine Political Thought*, pp. 70f). This Byzantine notion of the emperor as regal-sacerdotal head was referred to as *caesaropapism*; cf. Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1967), pp. 10ff.
- 13 Canning, *Medieval Political Thought*, p. 4. This modification was mostly brought about by Eusebius of Caesara (263–339). Probably the first king to hold his kingdom by divine favour was the Vandal Huniric (d. 484), and the first kings to style themselves *rex gratia Dei* were the Lombard Agilwulf (590–616) and the Visigoth Svinthila (621–631). See P. D. King, 'The Barbarian Kingdoms', pp. 127f, in Burns, *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, pp. 123–153, and Canning, *Medieval Political Thought*, p. 17.
- 14 King, *Barbarian Kingdoms*, p. 128. The unimportance of personal merit is even more pronounced when bishops and kings refer to their kingship as being such 'non merito sed gratia Dei' in their charters (see chapter 2).
- 15 King, *Barbarian Kingdoms*, p. 135.
- 16 St John of Damascus (675–754) (as quoted in Nicol, *Byzantine Political Thought*, p. 69). To this, St Theodore of Studium (759–826) adds: 'To kings and rulers it appertains [only] to lend their aid, to join in attesting doctrines, and to reconcile differences in respect of secular affairs. Nothing else has ever been given them by God, in the matter of divine doctrines' (Nicol, *Byzantine Political Thought*, p. 69).
- 17 Matt. 16.18–19: 'And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.'
- 18 St Ambrose (334/40–397) and Theodosius I; R. A. Markus, 'The Latin Fathers', p. 95, in Burns, *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, pp. 92–122. The relationship between St Ambrose and Emperor Theodosius I was admittedly somewhat strained, due to the former's excommunication of the latter in 390 after Theodosius had ordered a massacre of 7,000 inhabitants of Thessalonica.
- 19 Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 14, and Walter Ullmann, 'Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy', in Walter Ullmann, *The Church and the Law in the Earlier Middle Ages: Selected Essays* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1975) Essay IV, pp. 25–51 (original pagination).
- 20 PL 187 col. 458f. 'There are two powers, august Emperor, by which this world is chiefly ruled, namely, the sacred authority of the priests and the royal power. Of these that of the priests is the more weighty, since they have to render an account for even the kings of men in the divine judgment. You are also aware, dear son, that while you are permitted honorably to rule over human kind, yet in things divine you bow your head humbly before the leaders of the clergy and await from their hands the means of your salvation. In the reception and proper disposition of the heavenly mysteries you recognize that you should be subordinate rather than superior to the religious order, and that in these matters you depend on their judgment rather than wish to force them to follow your will. If the ministers of religion, recognizing the supremacy granted you from

heaven in matters affecting the public order, obey your laws, lest otherwise they might obstruct the course of secular affairs by irrelevant considerations, with what readiness should you not yield them obedience to whom is assigned the dispensing of the sacred mysteries of religion' (trsl. J. H. Robinson, *Readings in European History* [Boston, MA: Ginn, 1905], pp. 72–73).

²¹ Canning, *Medieval Political Thought*, p. 36.

²² P. G. Stein, 'Roman Law', p. 46, in Burns, *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, pp. 37–47.

²³ Nov. 6, Praef.: 'The greatest of the gifts of God to men, granted by the heavenly mercy, are the priesthood and the imperial authority; the one serves divine ends, the other rules over and cares for human affairs; and each of these springs from one and the same source and each adorns the life of man [. . .] For if the priesthood be blameless in every respect and full of faith before God, and if the imperial authority duly and rightly adorn the state which is entrusted to it, then there will result a fair harmony which will furnish every good thing to the human race. We are therefore concerned in the highest degree for the true doctrines inspired by God and for the integrity of the priesthood' (trsl. Nicol, *Byzantine Political Thought*, p. 68). Cf. also Canning, *Medieval Political Thought*, pp. 12f.

²⁴ Walter Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1966 [2nd ed.]), p. 57. Cf. also Matt. 16.19.

²⁵ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 22.

²⁶ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 23.

²⁷ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 44. The growing emancipation has also to be seen in the light of the Christianisation of Anglo-Saxon England. The Anglo-Saxons, in particular, venerated Rome and St Peter, which certainly strengthened the papal position (Ullmann, *Papal Government*, pp. 42f and 49).

²⁸ See Ullmann, *Papal Government*, pp. 45–50, for a more detailed analysis of the strife.

²⁹ The circumstances surrounding the 'selection' of Pippin as possible defender and protector are, of course, more complicated than laid down here. See Ullmann, *Papal Government*, pp. 49–74, and with regard to the development of the anointing ritual, chapter 5 below.

³⁰ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, pp. 68–73. *Romanorum* does not only refer to those people living in Rome, but to all inhabitants living under Western (in opposition to Eastern), i.e., Roman law and rule.

³¹ Canning, *Medieval Political Thought*, p. 19.

³² Ullmann, *Principles of Government*, p. 66. The so-called doctrine of the two swords (*Zwei-Schwerter-Lehre*) comes to mind, which has been used throughout the Middle Ages to explain the status of the clerical and secular orders. See Werner Goetz, 'Zwei-Schwerter-Lehre', in Norbert Angermann (ed.), *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, Vol. 9 (Munich: LexMA-Verlag, 1998), p. 725, and I. S. Robinson, 'Church and Papacy', pp. 300–305, in Burns, *Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, pp. 252–305.

³³ Sent. III, 51.4f: 'The princes of the world now and then occupy the greatest power within the Church for the purpose of protecting through this power the ecclesiastical discipline. For the rest, these powers would not be necessary within the Church, if the princes did not command through the terror of the discipline what the priest cannot achieve through preaching [alone]. The Kingdom of Heaven often profits from the earthly kingdom' (trsl. Luitpold Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne: Studies in Carolingian History and Literature* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959], p. 23).

³⁴ Ullmann, *Principles of Government*, p. 68.

³⁵ Ullmann, *Principles of Government*, p. 64f.

³⁶ See Janet Nelson, 'Carolingian Contacts', in Michelle Brown and Carol A. Farr (eds.), *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 126–143, and Joanne Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c.750–870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), ch. 6.

³⁷ Brooks, *Christ Church*, p. 111.

³⁸ Brooks, *Christ Church*, pp. 114–117.

³⁹ This is more fully discussed in Brooks, *Christ Church*, pp. 117f.

- ⁴⁰ ASC 787 (785): ‘Her wæs geflit and fullic sinoð æt Cealchyþe, and Eanbriht ærcebisceop forlet sumne dæl his bisceopdomes, and fram Offan cinge Higebriht wæs gecoren, and Ecgferð to cinge gehalgod’ (‘In this year there was a contentious synod at Chelsea, and Archbishop Jænberht lost a certain part of his province, and Hygeberht was chosen by King Offa. And Ecgrith was consecrated king’ [trsl. EHD I no. 1]). As Brooks notes, this entry suggests that Offa was only able to proceed with his son’s consecration by creating a compliant archbishop (*Christ Church*, pp. 118f).
- ⁴¹ Brooks, *Christ Church*, p. 125.
- ⁴² Haddan & Stubbs, pp. 521–523: ‘The prime honour of this dignity [i.e. primacy of see of Canterbury], as you know, King Offa tried to remove and disperse into two provinces, on account of the enmity he had formed against the venerable Jænberht and the people of Kent; and your most godly predecessor Hadrian at the request of the aforesaid king began to do what no one had presumed before and exalted the bishop of the Mercians with the *pallium*. [. . .] But yet we humbly implore your Excellency [. . .], to inquire into this matter with your wise men, and to deign to reply to us whatever it may seem to you that we ought to observe henceforth’ (trsl. EHD I no. 204).
- ⁴³ EHD I no. 205.
- ⁴⁴ In Coenwulf’s letter to Pope Leo III (EHD I no. 204).
- ⁴⁵ EHD I no. 209.
- ⁴⁶ Haddan & Stubbs, pp. 542–544: (trsl. Johnson, *Collection*, p. 297). A further by-product of that strife was, according to Michael Richter, the written professions of bishops for the archbishop of Canterbury, their purpose being to re-instate Canterbury authority and to remind every bishop of it upon their institution (*Canterbury Professions* [Beeston: Canterbury and York Society, 1973], p. xxxvii).
- ⁴⁷ Einhardt, *Charlemagne*, ch. 28.
- ⁴⁸ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, pp. 193–195.
- ⁴⁹ Steffen Patzold, ‘Die Bischöfe im karolingischen Staat’, p. 142, in Stuart Airlie, Walter Pohl, Helmut Reimitz (eds.), *Staat im frühen Mittelalter* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), pp. 133–162.
- ⁵⁰ As formulated by the clergy at the Parisian Synod of 829; Patzold, *Bischöfe*, p. 142. But see de Jong, who reads the acts of this synod in the light of a document of public penance rather than a statement of the division of secular and papal power (‘*Ecclesia* and the Early Medieval Polity’, pp. 129–131, in Airlie, Pohl and Reimitz, *Staat im frühen Mittelalter*, pp. 113–132).
- ⁵¹ Patzold, *Bischöfe*, p. 143 n. 64: ‘No one is more powerful in the Church than the bishop, but in the world no one is more exalted than the Christian emperor’ (trsl. from German K.McC.).
- ⁵² ‘Dei enim minister est, id est, a Deo constitutus est ad bonum tuum, ut suo timore et adiutorio custodiat et tueatur te, ne interficiaris ab inimico tuo, et tuam substantiam non diripiant alii.’ Haymo of Halberstadt, *In Divi Pauli Epistolas Expositio*, PL 117, col. 480D (trsl. Karl F. Morrison, *The Two Kingdoms. Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964], p. 121).
- ⁵³ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 131.
- ⁵⁴ Etym. IX, iii.4: ‘A reign (*regnum*) is so named from a king (*rex*, gen. *regis*), for as kings are so called from governing (*regere*), so reigns are called after the word for kings. [. . .] Kings are so called from governing[.] [. . .] But he does not govern who does not correct (*corriger*); therefore the name of king is held by one behaving rightly (*recte*), and lost by one doing wrong. Hence among the ancients such was the proverb: “You will be king (*rex*) if you behave rightly (*recte*); if you do not, you will not”’ (trsl. Stephen A. Barney, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* [Cambridge: CUP, 2006], pp. 199f).
- ⁵⁵ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 207.
- ⁵⁶ Morrison, *Two Kingdoms*, p. 261.
- ⁵⁷ See further chapter 5.
- ⁵⁸ See Peter R. McKeon, *Hincmar of Laon and Carolingian Politics* (Urbana and London: Illinois University Press, 1978) for the backgrounds to the deposition.

- ⁵⁹ Janet Nelson, “‘Not Bishops’ Bailiffs but Lords of the Earth’: Charles the Bald and the Problem of Sovereignty”, pp. 26f, in Diana Wood (ed.), *The Church and Sovereignty c.590–1918: Essays in Honour of Michael Wilks* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 23–34.
- ⁶⁰ PL 124 col. 878: ‘We reply that, as Pope Gregory says, we kings of the Franks born from the royal stock have hitherto been counted not as the stewards of bishops but as lords of the earth. And as Leo and the synod of Bourges wrote: Kings and emperors whom divine potency commanded to be in charge over territories have permitted to holy bishops the privilege of having their affairs treated separately according to imperial laws, but they have not been bishops’ bailiffs. And Augustine says: Possessions are possessed through the laws of kings, but kings don’t become estate-managers at bishops’ command’ (trsl. Nelson, *Bishops’ Bailiffs*, p. 28).
- ⁶¹ Nelson, ‘Bishops’ Bailiffs’, p. 30.
- ⁶² Nelson, ‘Bishops’ Bailiffs’, p. 33.
- ⁶³ Cf. Ullmann, *Principles of Government*, p. 140.
- ⁶⁴ Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*. The Birkbeck Lectures 1968–69 (London: Methuen, 1969), pp. 121f. This goes back to another Gelasian principle: ‘Nobody at any time and for whatever human pretext may haughtily set himself above the office of him who by Christ’s order was set above all and everyone and whom the universal Church had always recognized as its head’ (in Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 28). Cf. also the statement by John VIII that only God judges priests (in Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 221).

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Early Anglo-Saxon Politics

The impetus for converting the Anglo-Saxon peoples, if we believe the legend, was Pope Gregory the Great's conviction and earnest desire that such a fair people should not be left prey to the devil (HE, II.1). Accordingly, he sent missionaries to the angle of the Earth to convert the Anglo-Saxons. As is obvious from reading Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, the focus of this missionary undertaking was the king, thereby acknowledging that the king held responsibility over secular as well as religious affairs.¹ The arrival of Augustine and his fellow missionaries led to the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon church with its first archiepiscopal see at Canterbury. The establishment of the church in Anglo-Saxon England can be broadly categorised into two main movements: the strong monastic character of the church in the seventh and eighth centuries and the increase of episcopal power in the eighth and ninth centuries. Since the Augustinian mission was not the overwhelming success anticipated, the subsequent lack of diocesan churches allowed for an abundant establishment of monasteries.² Their advantages and their success are obvious. On an administrative level, they filled the gap left by an insufficient number of bishops to oversee the large territories of Anglo-Saxon kings.³ On a socio-cultural level, they were centres of learning and wisdom, sponsored by kings and nobles who thus advanced religious endeavours.⁴ On a personal level, monastic communities were able to supplant or extend one's kinship group, and 'private' monasteries, in particular, became keepers of family and dynastic history as well as symbols of familial pride.⁵ Towards the end of the seventh century, the foundation and endowment of monasteries experienced an unprecedented high. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, for example, shows the rise in monastic establishments: although he praises this movement, he is much more critical of it in his letter to Egbert, Archbishop of York (734–766). Indeed, kings and nobles expected a recompense for their generosity and it is thus no wonder that monastic property was very often conceived of as special family property, and that the founders and proprietors of monasteries were perceived as autonomous rulers.⁶ Royal monasteries, in particular, were often entangled in dynastic power struggles and were at times heavily affected by shifts in the secular power balances. Money and bribery were often the diplomatic means to (re-)gain royal favours; if such were not at hand, communities were suppressed by the secular overlords.⁷

It is not the intention of this chapter to recount the history of Anglo-Saxon England; instead, it will focus on politics and political structures, and will use a series of case

studies to explore this most complex aspect of the Anglo-Saxon past.⁸ Although Anglo-Saxon political institutions of the various pre-Christian kingdoms had their origin in their continental heritage, it is impossible to say in how far the Anglo-Saxon kingships resembled the continental Germanic institution or in how far the Anglo-Saxon variant was a specific development out of basic Germanic origins. Both correspond in two elementary aspects: military leadership and the execution of various political and religious functions.⁹ The first aspect was constitutive for Anglo-Saxon kingship: it was through military might that kings were made and unmade, territories conquered and authority ascertained. When reading Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, it seems that the most successful kings were those who exhibited ruthlessness in war instead of able statesmanship. The early entries in the ASC speak of the legendary Germanic ancestors of various Anglo-Saxon royal houses who were continually engaged in battle and thereby ensured the predominance of their kin. Anglo-Saxon royal dynasties thus sprang from powerful war leaders who had established the prominence of their family on the basis of military prowess. A number of royal duties developed out of such military success. A rapidly growing territory required administration, the sustenance of an army required taxation, and the unification of various peoples under one rulership required spiritual leadership. Furthermore, the establishment of a royal dynasty itself brought about new features of kingship: its provision and maintenance was ensured through the practice of itinerant kingship in combination with the royal *feorm*, and its throneworthiness was ensured through its links to a common spiritual background.

The initial geographical division of Anglo-Saxon England between 400 and 600 AD cannot be retraced fully.¹⁰ The arrival of the continental Germanic tribes disrupted the Romano-British structures and the new settlers dispersed the old. Basic Roman infrastructure probably remained unchanged and some of the territorial divisions of the Germanic settlements and early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms might have developed out of older divisions.¹¹ The leaders of such early settlements began to style themselves kings so that by the end of the sixth century several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were in existence.¹² The administrative centre of each province or region was the royal *villa*, or *tun*, which was visited by kings on their journey throughout their kingdom on regular intervals.¹³ At the time of the king's visit, the royal food-rent, or *feorm*, had to be rendered, which formed the economical basis of any itinerant kingship.¹⁴ The advantages of an itinerant kingship in comparison to one royal centre of administration are twofold: first, the annual journey allowed the king to visit (almost) each part of his kingdom and so to inform himself on local issues, and second, the burden of entertaining the royal retinue was evenly distributed throughout the year and across the country. Its disadvantages are similarly twofold: first, the absence of the king from one region for most of the year allowed local magnates to rule effectively as minor kings which could lead, in turn, to the development of internal factions, and second, the itinerary of other royal households could foster separate loyalties and thus threaten the unity of the kingdom.¹⁵ Furthermore, for the sons and daughters of noble families, the annual visit could be a stepping stone for a career at court.

The itineraries of kings also offer insight into the political structure of kingdoms. Those parts that were visited frequently formed the core or ancestral land, while those less frequented either lay on the periphery or were recently acquired areas. The assessment of tribute renders, whether in money, services or food, also provides information on overlordship and power balances in certain regions. One such assessment, the *Tribal*

Hidage, proves the existence of several tribes in the seventh century which were tributary to Mercia and to some degree already incorporated into the Mercian realm, but which still retained their respective tribal identity.¹⁶ Such regionalism is a feature of Anglo-Saxon England throughout its history, and a strong sense of ‘national pride’ is visible in several sources. When the Northumbrian king Oswiu defeated the Mercian king Penda in the battle at the river Winwæd in 655, he installed several noblemen to rule over Mercia. The Mercian noblemen rebelled against this overlordship and, after having successfully repelled the Northumbrian earls, chose as their own king the grandchild of Penda, Wulfhere (HE, III.24). The defeat by a foreign king and the subsequent rulership through external earls, and not through an internal sub-king as was common practice, triggered strong regional sentiments that led to the overthrow of such foreign rule.

Given such a context, the political landscape of early Anglo-Saxon England is characterised by a comparative instability of powers. Frequent warfare, throne contentions and territorial expansion all contributed to continuously shifting power balances among the several kingdoms. As a consequence, kingdoms were frequently subjected to the current dominant power, either retaining their status as a separate but tributary kingdom or being demoted to a province before their integration into the superior realm. The question remains, however, whether all regions and provinces that made up an Anglo-Saxon kingdom originally began as separate kingdoms themselves, or whether they began as a loose cluster of tribes with one tribal leader. Bede informs us that there were no kings among the Old Saxons but rather *viceroy*s (Lat. *satrap*):

Non enim habent regem iidem Antiqui Saxones, sed satrapas plurimos suae genti praepositos, qui ingruente belli articulo mittunt aequaliter sortes et, quemcumque sors ostenderit, hunc tempore belli ducem omnes secuntur, huic obtemperant; peracto autem bello, rursum aequalis potentiae omnes fiunt satrapae.¹⁷

It is fair to assume that the very early tribal organisations did not have kings according to later definitions. In due time, they would call themselves kings and proclaim their dynasty as the only throneworthy one. According to Nicholas Higham, it is these smaller regional kingships that formed the starting point for the later larger kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex.¹⁸ Centralising forces, fluctuating boundaries and changing foci of power further contributed to the merging of tribal units into larger kingdoms. Not all of these units, however, strove for superiority over others. Higham further states that ‘recurring clusters of kingships exhibit a strong tendency to act in consort when either rejecting or affirming the hegemony either of one of themselves or of an outsider’.¹⁹ Many of the smaller tribes are known to us only through the *Tribal Hidage* and even this document probably does not list all of them. In the course of time, their total number declined, with certain dynasties either becoming extinct or dominant; from the seventh century onwards only the most successful kingdoms survived.

To date many scholars have shied away from writing a comprehensive political history of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, focusing instead on separate kingdoms.²⁰ Arguably, this is a prudent approach. Apart from the simple fact that most Anglo-Saxon kingdoms did not evolve in a straightforward and linear manner, their political conditions are far too diverse to be generalised. What is true for one kingdom at one point in time might not be applicable to another one or might become obsolete with the passage of time.

General issues, such as the religious dimension of rulership or the growing antagonism between kings and clergy, can be found throughout all the realms, but there are aspects that are observable only in some kingdoms while negligible in others. The resulting diversity might seem confusing, but it also mirrors the political realities of that time: there simply is not just one theory that can be attributed to all kings. Although the sources do not allow for a conclusive or all-encompassing picture to emerge, they nevertheless shed light on the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon politics and they also show the indebtedness of early Anglo-Saxon political thought to continental concepts. Through the impact of the Conversion, Germanic conceptions of kingship changed but, strikingly, Anglo-Saxon kingship would develop to combine unique political features that differ greatly from their Carolingian and later Ottonian counterparts. The progress of abstract ideas and concepts occurs not lineally but rather in bends and curves, and each king or royal government approaches the tasks ahead differently. It is here that some of the more interesting or curious sides of political development can be found. Only by looking at the characteristics of early political life separately can additional insight be formed and a wider picture gained. It is thus the intention of this chapter to have a closer look at the individual kingdoms and how their kings dealt with particular issues.²¹ It will use a case study approach as this method of organising the available material offers greater flexibility and interpretative command over the various political aspects in focus here. This also means that discussions are necessarily limited to a specific geographical region; this is not to say, however, that the political feature highlighted did not occur elsewhere or at a later point in time.

There will be seven case studies on the following aspects: joint kingship, overlordship, coinage, legislation, royal education, royal abdication and saint-kings. Case study I discusses joint kingship with regard to the kingdom of Essex. While having two kings might appear problematic, especially when they were in disagreement, it allowed for the younger king to undergo specific royal training supervised by the older and more experienced king. At the time of succession, the junior king would then have the qualifications necessary to take over the government seamlessly, and without the social upheavals that royal successions might entail. The different aspects of subjection and overlordship are illustrated with the fate of the Sussex kingdom in case study II. Subjection could either mean the incorporation of the inferior realm into the superior kingdom, or rendering the inferior one tributary. It would thus retain its administrative structures, even its royal dynasty, but it would depend on an overlord in all major decisions and be obliged to render military and monetary aid. The opposite of that feature, conquest, is exemplified in case study III with the kingdom of Mercia. Here, it is demonstrated how the introduction of a new currency served to establish the new authority, but also how the acceptance and/or rejection of the new money paralleled the success of imposing a new authority onto the conquered kingdom. Case study IV demonstrates the new duty of legislation and its impact on royal authority in regard to the kingdom of Kent. Written laws codify a certain practice but also royal power. Furthermore, the law codes show how the Church was integrated into the king's judicial dominion by applying the *wergild* system to ecclesiastical matters. Law thus became a Christian king's duty. The Conversion necessitated the transmission of Christian political thought, and, in particular, an image of kingship that was specifically Christian. For that purpose, kings needed to be educated before they could be called upon to correct their peoples' behaviour and morals. The kingdom of East

Anglia serves to demonstrate the importance of education and instruction in case study V. Another important impact of the Conversion was the new way of life that Christianity promulgated. As Wessex kings demonstrate, this was attractive to early Anglo-Saxon rulers who left their thrones to become pilgrims or monks (case study VI). While the pursuit of a religious life was a commendable course, it opened up serious questions about the nature of kingship. As a mere office it certainly could be terminated, but as a divinely conferred ministry it could not easily be revoked. Case study VII illustrates this early religious fervour through the emergence of early Anglo-Saxon saint-kings, many of whom came from the Northumbrian royal dynasty. In contrast to the abdicating kings, who experienced their kingship mostly as toil and burden, these saint-kings embraced an active royal life and died fulfilling their royal duties. Their subsequent veneration as saints served political as well as social needs. All these case studies shed light on various aspects of early Anglo-Saxon kingship that would remain opaque in a general survey.

Case Study I: Joint Kingship (Essex)

Joint rulership was an essential means to satisfy the ambitions of several members of a royal family at the same time, without subjecting a kingdom to the upheavals of battles or internal turmoil that probate disputes could bring. At the most basic level, there are three forms of joint kingship: a co-rule between father and son, between brothers, and between otherwise related family members (cousins, nephew and uncle, etc.). Where an older ruler reigned with a younger relative, this was in effect an apprentice kingship: by ruling (usually) over the smaller and less important part of a kingdom, the junior king learns the art of government from his older and more experienced co-ruler. Joint kingship also involves a territorial division of the realm, either along natural boundaries, traditionally established divisions or along tribal lines.²² Following customary practice, the larger and more important part was ruled by the older or more prominent king and the lesser by the younger or less prominent one. When the senior king died, the younger would succeed to the 'better' part of the kingdom and another family member would ascend the throne of the minor part. While this did not always happen smoothly, the joint kingship system prevented interregna and almost always guaranteed a continuous supply of rulers.

A closer look at the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Essex allows us to explore joint kingship in more detail. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* supplies information up to the early eighth century, the charters allow for conclusions to be drawn on the power dynamics within the kingdom, genealogies offer information on the royal dynasty and succession, and entries in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* reveal historical background knowledge. From these, a regnal list can be established, following three (incomplete) genealogies in one surviving pre-Conquest text of the Essex royal dynasties (London, BL Add. 23211):²³

About the East Saxon kings. Offa was the son of Sighere, the son of Sigberht, the son of Saweard, the son of Saberht, the son of Sledd, the son of Æscwine, the son of Offa, the son of Bedca, the son of Sigefugl, the son of Swæppa, the son of Antsecg, the son of Gesecg, the son of Seaxnet. *Also about the East Saxon kings.* Swithred was the son of Sigemund, the son of Sigehard, the son of Sebbe, the son of Seaxred, the son of Saberht, the son of Sledd. *Also about the East Saxon kings.* Sigered was the son of Sigeric, the son of Selered, the son of Sigeberht, the son of Sigeald, the son of Seleferth, the son of Sigeferth, the son of Seaxa, the son of Sledd, and so on.²⁴

There is a close Kentish connection, as shown by the marriage between Æthelberht's sister Ricula and Sledd, the founding father of the Essex dynasty (HE, II.3). Æthelberht might have helped Sledd to the throne on condition of his marriage to Ricula, and an at least temporary subjection of Essex to Kent.²⁵ Sledd had two sons, Sæberht and Seaxa, and succession to the throne was restricted to these two branches. The regnal list from Sledd onwards then, looks as follows:

- 1 Sledd (?–?604)
- 2 Sæberht (?604–616)
- 3 Sæward, Seaxred and ?Seaxbald²⁶ (616–?623) – brothers
- 4 Sigberht 'Parvus' (?623–?) – probably a son of Sæberht's brother Seaxa rather than a son of Sæward
- 5 Sigberht 'Sanctus' (?–653) – probably a son of Sæward
- 6 Swithelm and Swithfrith (?653–664) – brothers, probably sons of Seaxbald
- 7 Sigehere (663/4–688) and Sæbbi (663/4–693/4) – cousins
- 8 Offa (693/4–709), Sigehard (693/4–?) and Swæfred (693/4–?) – cousin and two brothers
- 9 Selered (?–746) and Swæfberht (?–738) – kinship unknown, Selered stems from Seaxa's line
- 10 Swithred (?746–?)
- 11 Sigeric I (?–798)
- 12 Sigereð (?798–825)
- 13 Sigeric II (825–?833) – kinship relation to predecessor not known²⁷

Accordingly, there were five known instances of joint rule in Essex: between brothers (nos 3 and 6), between cousins once removed (no. 7), between two brothers and their cousin twice removed (no. 8) and between two probably unrelated kings (no. 9).

The sources documenting joint rule point to a division of the Essex territory between the rulers. Thus, Sæbbi and Sigehere each ruled a different part as independent kings, and both were able to enter different alliances.²⁸ While in this case, both rulers shared equal power over their part, it is difficult to establish whether this also holds true for the other instances of joint reigns. Equal kinship relations might have meant equal power, whereas differences in the degree of kinship might have affected the power balance. Since there are few extant charters, it is also problematic to draw any conclusions about how far each king or sub-king influenced the other(s). Charters S 64 and 1784 by Offa of Essex, for example, reveal the difficulty of ascribing a definite rank to a ruler. In S 64, Offa is referred to as both *rex* and *subregulus*. His grant comprises land in Mercia (modern Warwickshire) and the witness list does not contain any mention of his East Saxon co-rulers.²⁹ According to Bede, however, Offa was not yet full king: 'Offa was a youth so lovable and handsome that the whole race longed for him to have and to hold the sceptre of the kingdom' (HE, V.19). Thus, Offa could have been a sub-king waiting for his turn to succeed to the whole kingdom, or an as yet unacknowledged *ætheling*. His relation with Mercia was strong enough to make independent land grants (they are also not witnessed by a Mercian king), but this connection also proved the end to his ambition. When Ceolred abdicated and went to Rome he was accompanied by Offa (HE, V.19), which put an end to his ruling ambitions.

The case study of Essex shows the potential flexibility rulership could have. Joint kingship was a persistent feature until the second quarter of the eighth century. Its success lies in the fact that it kept the succession within one branch of the royal family; only with Selered did the second branch predominate. Although there is no evidence that Essex was ever ruled by a father and son together, the model of joint kingship might well have been instituted by such a precursor and then continued with other kinship relations. The major advantage is that it 'enabled the chief king to nominate his successor during his lifetime and for his nominee to build up a following and a reputation while in the junior position'.³⁰ Thus, interregna were avoided and the usual causes for revolt and rebellion diminished. Joint kingship, then, seems to have been the preferred model of government in cases where there was more than one equally legitimate aspirant (heir) to the throne from the same kin group. The main flaw of joint kingship could lie in the danger of weakening the whole kingdom by splitting it into two, or more, parts. However, from this discussion of Essex, it appears that joint kingship kept the governance in the hands of one ruling dynasty, and this ultimately strengthened the realm.³¹

Case Study II: Overlordship (Sussex)

The political feature of overlordship can be explored by taking a closer look at the Sussex kingdom, as it was frequently subjected to other dominant powers. Although there are only a few extant charters from the Selsey archive, it is possible to reconstruct the fortunes of the Sussex royals, especially during the Wessex and Mercian supremacy. There are only nine surviving charters that were issued by kings of Sussex, and about sixteen by other nobles and bishops and later Anglo-Saxon kings.³² Due to the historical upheavals in Sussex, it is fair to assume that the extant records represent only a small number of the charters produced at Selsey.³³ Charters seem to have been introduced rather late in the seventh century, with a noticeable Northumbrian and Hwiccan influence due to Bishop Wilfrid's mission and the marriage of King Æthelwealh to Eafe, a princess of the Hwicce (HE, IV.13).³⁴

Since there is no royal genealogy or regnal list left of the royal house(s) of Sussex, it is impossible to construct a continuous line of throne ascensions and regnal years. Like other kingdoms of the sixth and seventh centuries, Sussex was at times ruled by several kings jointly. This might be due to a (traditional?) territorial division, as, for example, with the *Hæstingas* situated in the far eastern part of Sussex.³⁵ With regard to multiple kingship, a territorial division would certainly be advantageous and sensible to allow for the succession of brothers, although it is impossible to establish the kinship relations of the Sussex rulers. There may have been two royal houses following the frequency of names beginning with Æthel- and Os- in some charters, which might either derive from the Hwiccan royal house or even the Northumbrian one.³⁶ Combining other sources and the charters with their subscription lists, the following (incomplete) regnal list can be established:

Sussex rule: Ælle (477–?491)

Æthelwealh (?–685)

Berhthun (685–686) and Andhun (685–?686) – joint rulers

Wessex rule: Cadwalla (686–688)

Ine (688–692) – it is unclear, however, if Ine ruled Sussex directly

Sussex rule: Nunna/Nothhelm³⁷ (692–c.725), Wattus (?–?700) and Athelstan

(714–720) – joint rulers; rather than having a tripartite rule, it seems that Athelstan took Wattus' position after the latter's death and after an interval of at least a decade of single-rule of Nunna

Æthelberht (725–c.750)

Osmund (758–772) – joint rule with Ealdwulf

Ealdwulf (765–791) – Ealdwulf was demoted from rex to dux during his reign, probably in the early 770s after Osmund's death (?) and following Mercian annexation

Ælfwald (c.760–?772) – joint ruler with Ealdwulf, Oswald and Oslac and likewise demoted

Oswald (c.760–?772) – joint ruler with Ealdwulf, Ælfwald and Oslac and likewise demoted

Oslac (?765–?780) – joint ruler with Ealdwulf, Ælfwald and Oswald and likewise demoted

There is no further mention of any South Saxon king or duke after the end of the eighth century. The kingdom was integrated first into Mercia and then into Wessex. Unlike other early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Sussex did not have one ruling dynasty from which its kings derived – a fact that might account for the instability and inconsistency of Sussex royal rule, and the apparent ease with which the kingdom was frequently taken over by external powers. Multiple kingship also features strongly in South Saxon politics: at times there were three to four kings reigning simultaneously, most likely in separate territories within the Sussex kingdom.³⁸

The first hint of any subjection of Sussex to another power is found in the marriage between King Æthelwealh and Eafe, a Hwiccean princess.³⁹ In his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (IV.13), Bede relates that at the suggestion of King Wulfhere of Mercia, Æthelwealh had been baptised and received the province of the Meonware and the Isle of Wight after his spiritual adoption by Wulfhere. Since the Hwicce was a dependent province of Mercia, Wulfhere might well have been the instigator of that marriage and imposed the requirement of baptism on Æthelwealh. It must remain speculation whether this was done due to a possible alliance of equal partners, or whether Wulfhere had gained sufficient power in Sussex to demand this marriage connection and Æthelwealh's baptism. Soon afterwards Bishop Wilfrid arrived, and with the king's consent converted the whole kingdom to Christianity and founded the monastery at Selsey.⁴⁰ Wilfrid also befriended the exiled Cædwalla and assisted him until the prince finally overcame his enemies to become king of Wessex.⁴¹ Cædwalla then turned on his erstwhile protector and killed King Æthelwealh, which initiated a time of oppression and harshness for Sussex (HE, IV.15). Overall, Æthelwealh's success as king was short-lived, and the extent of his dependence on an overlord suggests kingship in name only. A forged foundation charter of the Selsey monastery (S 232) by King Cædwalla grants land to Wilfrid, the very same land granted to him earlier by King Æthelwealh.⁴² Although this charter is fraught with problems and highly spurious, it affirms Wessex rule in Sussex; it is telling that the tenth-century forger decided to produce a foundation charter by Cædwalla instead of Æthelwealh.⁴³

Wessex overlordship persisted for at least six years, from 686 to 692. Nunna, or Nothhelm, ascended to the Sussex throne in 692, perhaps installed by Ine and probably still under Ine's overlordship at his death in 725 (with an interregnum of King Athelstan from c.714–720). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in 710 the two men fought side by side against the Cornish King Geraint, and the A and E recensions state that they were kinsmen. Nunna might have been a family member of the Wessex royal house whom Ine provided with a sub-kingdom. Nunna's military service would then be performed out of obligation rather than mutual alliance. Wessex's interest in Sussex is unsurprising: overlordship or assimilation of Sussex allowed access to Kent and London. Charter S 45, one of four surviving charters by Nunna, dates from 692 and is the clearest indication of a continued Wessex overlordship because Ine and his father Coenred witnessed it. It is, however, unclear how long Wessex dominion persisted. The last extant charter by Nunna (S 42; AD 714 for 717 or 724) is witnessed by King Æthelstan and Queen Æthelthryth of Sussex, which indicates the end of Wessex overlordship; a subsequent charter by Nunna's successor King Æthelberht (S 46; AD 733 x [747 x 765]) is not witnessed by a Wessex king.

Sussex did not remain independent for long, if indeed it ever regained independence instead of passing from one hand into another.⁴⁴ King Offa of Mercia subjected Sussex to his rule, probably in the 770s, and, although the sources are silent on the actual circumstances, it might have been begun with Offa's conquest of the *Hæstingas* in eastern Sussex.⁴⁵ Offa's subjection of Sussex gave him access to parts of the Southern coastline, but also posed a threat to both Wessex and Kent. In contrast to his Wessex predecessors, Offa officially demoted the status of the Sussex rulers from *reges* to *duces*, as is evidenced by several charters of that period.⁴⁶ Sussex remained in Mercian hands until its fall in the 820s. Mercian dominion varied in extent and degree, especially during Kent's freedom from Mercia between 776 and 784, when Duke Oslac's charter (S 1184 from AD 780) does not refer to any Mercian overlord.⁴⁷ After Offa's death, his successor Coenwulf established dominion over south-east England, but with Wessex's rise to supremacy under King Egbert and the ensuing collapse of the Mercian realm, Sussex was again subordinated to Wessex.⁴⁸

The case study of Sussex shows how easily a kingdom, and its ruling dynasty, could become a pawn in the aspirations of larger neighbouring realms and rulers. It is impossible to establish from the extant sources whether this subjection was achieved by force or whether it grew out of some alliances that turned into obligations. The instability and weakness of the South Saxon royal house in not being able to provide for a continuing rule is one reason for the apparent ease of the kingdom's subjection. Rulers also willingly entered such dependent relations as a measure of protection against other enemies, particularly at the time of Viking threats. Apart from easier access to Kent, London and the coast, the territory of Sussex did not seem to offer much for any ruler and thus might have been regarded as a buffer zone where different interest surfaced (and were played out).

Case Study III: Conquest and Coinage (Mercia)

A coin is the one object that expresses most tangibly the strength and thus the success of conquering kings. Though perhaps not as obvious as jewels or weapons, coins can

effectively express royal dignity and enhance royal status as they permeate through almost all levels of society. Indeed, the development of coinage and monetary exchange reflect the growth and consolidation of the various Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and the increasing power and authority of Anglo-Saxon kingship. The processes involved covered several stages and it is not until the tenth century that coinage was brought firmly under royal control. Until then, the changing designs on the obverse and reverse of the coins, the output of the mints, the moneyers, importing of foreign coins, coin debasement and monetary reforms were phases of a growing reliance on coins (including its effects on economy). A single disc can display authorities: the subjection and domination of kingdoms and the assertion of ecclesiastical authority.

The end of Roman Britain and the subsequent Germanic invasion brought a complete halt to coin production and monetary circulation for almost two centuries.⁴⁹ The Anglo-Saxons were thus indebted to their continental neighbours, from whom they learnt the use of coinage and initially borrowed their coin designs. In the early seventh century, coins had only a limited monetary function but were used mainly for ornamental purposes and special transaction, and by only a rather limited group of individuals. The introduction of a domestic coinage did not end the import of foreign coinage – indeed, the coin hoard of the Sutton Hoo ship burial (620s) is made up entirely of Merovingian coins – but the import lessened considerably during the second half of the seventh century when domestic output grew. The early coin designs were inspired by Merovingian and Imperial prototypes, but specifically Anglo-Saxon designs were struck from the eighth century onwards, often taken from a Germanic mythological background (for example, animals). With the exception of King Eadbald of Kent (614–640), coins did not usually bear royal names, although in the north coinage was overtly regal as initiated by King Aldfrith in c.700. The majority of coins from that early period are uninscribed and the few that are inscribed generally bear a personal name or that of the mint. Since coins were struck in only a small number of mints and with a limited number of designs, a regulation of currency to some extent was plausible. It is, however, difficult to say whether coinage and minting were already royal prerogatives at this early stage. The absence of royal names on coins suggests a certain autonomy of the mints and moneyers, especially when compared to the frequency that the names of mint or moneyer are inscribed on the coins. Royal regulation of coinage thus proceeded in several stages, probably from the seventh century to the eighth and beyond. Indeed, it is only from the law codes of the tenth and early eleventh centuries that explicit laws on coinage can be found.⁵⁰

The penny was the sole denomination in Anglo-Saxon coinage in its middle to later stages; the only other higher-value coin was the mancus (30 pence), which was struck only occasionally and for charitable purposes. After debasement and reform, the broader penny was introduced in southern England in the 770s, and coinage became royal in character. These coins bear the royal name in a circular inscription with the title *rex* followed by the name or initial of the respective kingdom, the moneyer's name being inscribed usually on their reverse. The archbishops of York and Canterbury enjoyed minting rights to a limited extent; the earliest ecclesiastical coins come from Archbishop Egbert of York (732–766).⁵¹ On these, the king's name is usually on the obverse and that of the archbishop on the reverse. An exception is the coinage of Archbishop Wulfred of Canterbury (805–832) which does not contain any reference to a royal authority. Since the supremacy of neither Kent nor Mercia was asserted, Wulfred thus avoided stating

any royal allegiance of the archiepiscopate of Canterbury and instead promoted the independence of the Church. Although an increasing degree of political intervention and restriction of minting rights is reflected in the coin designs and legends, the continuity of minting, even in times of trouble and upheaval, speaks more for an independence from royal administration. Similarly, moneyers struck coins for various kings, depending on who had gained supremacy.⁵² The moneyers' reluctance to acknowledge any new royal authority and their hesitation to proclaim their loyalty to any king on newly struck coins thus indicates a rather weak royal influence on coinage and minting.⁵³

Following the coin debasement in the mid-eighth century, kings aimed to restore coinage, with the first attempts coming from East Anglia. King Beonna (749–758) issued coins that for the first time bore the name and title of the king in runes, or in a mixture of runes and Roman letters.⁵⁴ Until then, there was almost no uniformity in design so that many coins reveal a high level of artistry, from purely geometric designs to portraits and animal depictions.⁵⁵ The only other type that was struck was a gold coin with the inscription *Offa Rex*, which probably belonged to the 365 mancuses promised annually by Offa to the pope.⁵⁶

Offa employed at least four mints with some degree of regularity: Canterbury, Rochester, London and one in East Anglia. Only the one in London was within the Mercian realm and the mint output of the other three reflects the successes and failures of Offa's expansionist schemes: while Offa exercised direct authority in Kent and East Anglia, he issued coins in the mints there. Yet, whenever his authority in the two smaller kingdoms was questioned or even overthrown, local kings began to reissue coins in their name, thereby reclaiming their authority.⁵⁷ Resurgences of local power are reflected in the coinage and indicate how stable or unstable Offa's dominion actually was. In East Anglia, for example, Æthelberht (779–794) rebelled against Offa, who probably had taken control over the country after the death of Beonna in c.758. Æthelberht issued his own coins soon after he asserted his authority, which reveals the impact and symbolic power of coinage with regard to the struggles between kings. On Offa's orders, Æthelberht was killed (ASC 794), and subsequently Offa issued his own coins again. After his death and before Mercian supremacy was restored, another East Anglian king, Eadwald (796), took power and also quickly issued coins in his name, inscribed with *Eadwald Rex*. As soon as Coenwulf re-established his power, he issued coins bearing his name.⁵⁸ This quick succession of different coinages is unsurprising given the rather hostile circumstances. Coinage had become a powerful political tool, not only to collect urgently needed money, but to ascertain authority in a newly conquered territory.

After Coenwulf's death in 821, the struggles of his successors and the eventual supremacy of Wessex over Mercia are also echoed in the coinage. The mints at Rochester and Canterbury were now controlled by Wessex, the East Anglian one passed to local rulers, and thus only London remained as the single Mercian mint.⁵⁹ However, Egbert of Wessex (802–839) used his one-year rule (829–830) over Mercia to issue coins with the inscription *Rex M[erciorum]*, using the London mint, in order to assert his authority before Wiglaf (827–829 & 830–840) returned to power in 830.⁶⁰ The Viking attacks further disrupted the monetary system, bringing the local mints to a halt, and also introducing their own Norse coinage. Authority over a conquered area hence became a financial business: subjected kingdoms were either made tributary or their annexation was supported through the introduction of a new coinage. The latter, in particular, materialised the new authority by rendering both abstract power and a distant king visible and palpable.

Case Study IV: Kingship and Legislation (Kent)

Legislation had been a royal duty before the conversion to Christianity. As the highest authority the king was the ultimate court of appeal, and his decisions were deemed ‘right’. The conversion did not change this duty, but rather gave it another dimension or quality. Law-giving and law-making became the prerogative of kings and their councils, but furthermore it was now a requirement of kingship. A king had to give his people a legal frame within which they were supposed to live, and he also had to ensure that they abide by his laws. The importance of this duty had already been expressed by St Augustine of Hippo:

Aliter enim servit, quia homo est; aliter, quia etiam rex est; quia homo est ei, servit vivendo fideliter; quia vero etiam rex est, servit leges justa præcipientes et contraria prohibentes convenienti vigore sanciendo.⁶¹

Legislation and royal fulfilment of duties towards God were linked to form one of the essential dimensions of early medieval kingship. A comparison of the extant law codes shows that the early laws retain many features of the oral culture they stem from, whereas the later ones become more elaborate in style and language and also more detailed. They reflect the increasing importance of the legislation process, but also the rising number of subjects on which the king saw it his duty to legislate and hence to intervene.

The first king to issue a law code was Æthelberht I: ‘Among other benefits which he conferred upon the race under his care, he established with the advice of his counsellors a code of laws after the Roman manner. These are written in English and are still kept and observed by the people’ (HE, II.5). The other two extant early Kentish law codes were issued by Hlothhere and Eadric (around 679–685) and Wihtred (695), and a fourth seventh-century code belongs to Ine of Wessex (688–694). The earliest code, and Bede’s accompanying comment, poses several problems, such as language, the meaning of ‘Roman manner’ and ‘code of law’ or the general legislative processes.⁶² Of interest here, however, is in how far the early Kentish legislation reflects a different, even new, understanding of kingship and how the laws incorporate the secular and religious spheres of society.

It is unsurprising that of Æthelberht’s 90 laws only one deals with the Church.⁶³ These laws are traditional *æ/peaw*, that is customary laws, rather than newly invented *domas*.⁶⁴ They reflect a preoccupation with fines for certain trespasses and compensations due upon physical injuries, and are drawn from actual cases rather than from abstract surmising. In the early seventh century, kings did not yet view legislation as their principal duty and the very act of encasing laws in writing was progress in itself. Æthelberht’s laws are hence more indebted to the pagan past in their adherence to traditional customs than innovative and Christianised, as later laws should become. The only law that is new is the first:

§ 1. Godes feoh & ciricean twelfgylde. Biscopes feoh xigylde. Preostes feoh nigongylde. Diacones feoh sixgylde. Cleroces feoh þrigylde. Ciricfriþ twigylde. Mæthlfriþ twigylde.⁶⁵

Æthelberht here acknowledges the growing importance of the Church within his kingdom and society at large, and incorporates it into the established Germanic system of monetary

compensations. It is interesting that this law should come first – one would assume that laws concerning the king would occupy that position as reflection of his rank – but it is even more interesting that there is no equivalent law with regard to the property of the king (but §§ 2–12 deal with crimes committed in the king's presence or with breaches of the royal protection). There is as of yet neither a tangible equalisation of Church and State, nor a sub- or superordination of either one. All that Æthelberht does is acknowledge the presence of the Church within Kentish society and endow it with a legal voice.

The Kentish laws of the late seventh century, in particular by Wihtred, show an increased understanding of the royal business of law-making as well as of the consolidating position of the Church.⁶⁶ It is one feature of Anglo-Saxon law that kings deliberate and promulgate laws with the leading men of their kingdom, including churchmen, which is usually acknowledged in the codes' prologues. Æthelberht, Hlothhere and Eadric do not mention the involvement of ecclesiastics, and, at least in Æthelberht's case, it is doubtful whether churchmen actually took part in the process. Wihtred, in contrast, explicitly states the participation of Archbishop Brihtwold and Bishop Gefmund of Rochester as well as every Church order, but does not mention leading secular nobles. Legislation has now become an active part of kingship, but also an active part of Church business. With regard to the Christianisation of kingship, this development is unsurprising: the king as *rex gratia Dei* has to acknowledge and include the ecclesiastical sphere in his government of the realm. He has to ensure that the Church's rights are protected and that the Church can fulfil its duty. Since the Church also redefined kings as protectors and defenders of the Faith, churchmen began to make claims upon kings, and Anglo-Saxon kings began to legislate (and so intervene) in Church business with increasing diligence. While early kings only issued a small amount of laws concerning the Church, later kings would draw up complete ecclesiastical codes.⁶⁷

The differences between Æthelberht's and Wihtred's codes already point towards this development. Wihtred's code contains nine laws that relate explicitly to Church matters (§§ 1, 2, 6, 7, 16–19, 22). The Church has now become a sovereign power similar to the king. This is (partly) evidenced by the first law, which declares that the Church is freed from taxation. While this law benefits the Church, with its monasteries and landed endowments, it severely diminishes the revenues due to the king. The seventh and early eighth centuries, in particular, are marked by a religious fervour which is expressed in the establishment of monasteries and churches with accompanying land grants. Unsurprisingly, several kings regarded their bishops' riches with jealousy and frequently tried to appropriate monastic lands for the royal coffers.⁶⁸

The laws also reveal further proof for the Church's growing authority:

§ 2. Ciricean mundbyrd sie L scillinga swa cinges.

§ 16. Biscopes word & cyninges sie unlægne buton aþe.⁶⁹

Ecclesiastical and royal protection and oaths are now of the same value. In the hundred years from St Augustine's arrival on Anglo-Saxon shores to Wihtred's law code, the Church has become established and institutionalised so that there was no obvious hierarchical difference between the ecclesiastical and secular heads. There seems to be no clear separation between the two realms as far as authority is concerned. Wihtred is even more innovative when he legislates on clerical misbehaviour (§ 6 and 7). Royal transgression

into the ecclesiastical sphere was frequently met with resentment by ecclesiastics.⁷⁰ In this case, however, it was the king's duty to punish offences against the Church, even if that meant proceeding against a member of the clergy.⁷¹ Wihtred reveals the Church's tightening grip on Anglo-Saxon society,⁷² a grip, it seems, rather willingly accepted because of its benefits:

§ 1.1. & man for cyning gebidde, & hine buton neadhæse heora willum weorpigen.⁷³

While rulers had always been honoured in certain ways, Wihtred's law is the first that explicitly commands this reverence. Intercessions and prayers on the king's behalf are common, and the pre-Christian worship has now been set within a legal sphere.⁷⁴ Although Wihtred wants his honours and prayers freely bestowed, later laws show that reverence of the king was attached to the institution of kingship rather than to the person of the king. Since kingship is understood as a divinely conferred ministry, veneration is due to that office and not to the office-holder. In pagan times, kingship was mainly legitimised through divine descent, so that office and office-holder were one and the same. With Christianity, though, an increasing separation of the king as person from the office he occupies is discernible – since God bestows the office and also withdraws it, the king has become replaceable and only the office remains permanent.

These early law codes show that law-making and enforcing their observance became an increasing part of the royal duties, and they also reveal the growing importance of the Church in the secular realm. At this early stage, kings only acknowledged select ecclesiastical rights in their laws so that one cannot yet speak of a close parallelism between, or equal emphasis of, both spheres. Wihtred of Kent is the first to equate king and bishop with regard to oath and protection, and the further development of the laws displays how closely secular kingship became entwined with religion and to what extent kings perceived it as their duty to regulate Church affairs.

Case Study V: Royal Education (East Anglia)

When Sigeberht ascended the throne of East Anglia in 631, the kingdom had been swaying between paganism and Christianity under his predecessors Rædwald (593–617), Eni (617–618), Eorpwald (618–628) and Ricbert (628–631). Sigeberht had been in exile in Gaul, where he received baptism, and, upon his return to East Anglia, he promoted the Christian faith with the support of Bishop Felix (HE, III.18). Furthermore:

patriam reuersus, ubi regno potitus est, mox ea, quae in Gallis bene disposita uidit, imitari cupiens, instituit scholam, in qua pueri litteris erudirentur; iuuante se episcopo Felice, quem de Cantia acceperat, eisque pedagogos ac magistros iuxta morem Cantuariorum praebente.⁷⁵

Education is one of the principal achievements of Christianity since Christianity is very much a book-religion. In its earliest times teaching and learning were confined to those destined to join the clergy because they needed to be able to read Scripture.⁷⁶ Schooling was a matter left in the hands of the clergy, and kings and nobility seemed relatively unconcerned with its advancement. According to Bede, Sigeberht was impressed with

the Gaulish model and probably understood the advantages of having learned and literate clerics ready at hand. Although the passage from Bede implies that Sigeberht focused more on imitating the continental example than being driven by a general desire to promote learning, we can already glimpse a growing educational aspect of kingship. Education as a dimension of kingship does not rest on the king's awareness of its necessity alone. Rather, it comprises two main phases: the education of the king, and the king as educator. The establishment of schools is thus only a second step within this concept, because the king himself must learn before he can teach.

There are unfortunately no extant sources to tell us how the royal æthelings were prepared for their role of kingship, if indeed that was done at all. What can be (indirectly) gained from Bede and from the lives of early saints is that their duties seemed to grow with their age until the time they succeeded to the throne. References to learning and wisdom are also scattered throughout the Anglo-Saxon poetic corpus, pointing to the importance of having a quick mind and a quick hand.⁷⁷ It is with Christianity, however, that kings were put on the school bench: most kings received careful instruction in the Christian religion before they were baptised.⁷⁸ When a king had eventually accepted the new faith, the people in his kingdom would follow suit almost immediately. This is due in part to the political implications of such a decision, but mainly to the function of the king as role model for his people. Pope Gregory the Great thus exhorts Æthelberht of Kent to work continually for the benefit of his people by 'exhorting them, terrifying, enticing, and correcting them, and by showing an example of good works' (HE, I.32). Of course, such work will be rewarded by God and His favours will also extend over the kingdom. Stephen of Ripon's *Life of St Wilfrid*, for example, nicely illustrates how closely the fortunes of the king were connected to the benevolence of his bishop:

In diebus autem illis Ecfrithus rex religiosus cum beatissima regina Aethiltrythae [. . .] simul in unum Wilfritho episcopo in omnibus oboedientes faci, pax et gaudium in populis et anni frugiferi victoriaeque in hostes, Deo adiuvante, subsecutae sunt. [. . .] ita, Ecfritho rege in concordia pontificis nostri vivente, secundum multorum testimonium regnum undique per victorias triumphales augebatur: concordia vero inter eos sopita et regina supradicta ab eo separata et Deo dicata, triumphus in diebus regis desinit.⁷⁹

For as long as the king follows his bishop's instruction, he and his people prosper. As soon as the king refuses to listen to him, and thus to being further educated, the fortunes of king and kingdom fail. The king's capacity as role model is therefore a very serious one, since in refusing he jeopardises not only his own person but also his people. The king educates by being an exemplar to his people and providing a model which they ought to follow.

The conversion of kings and their education in spiritual matters was not the sole instructional aspect of Christianity. The adherence to a totally new belief system necessitated a change in the conceptual framework: the subordination of earthly kings to the Heavenly King and the establishment of a religious realm within the secular one required new, or at least adapted, dimensions of kingship. Instead of the king acting as spiritual leader, there was now the Church, which had thus appropriated an essential part of pagan kingship. The functions and duties of kings had to be redefined and, consequently, kings had to be instructed in these new aspects of their kingship. The first such manual is Gregory

the Great's *Cura Pastoralis* (591). Although this book was written for the episcopate as shepherds over the Christian flock, many of Gregory's thoughts can also be easily applied to a secular ruler. Chapter seventeen, in particular, works as an early mirror for princes:

Se ealdormonn sceal lætan hine selfne gelicne his hieremonnum: he sceal bion hira gefera for eaðmodnesse ðara ðeah ðe wel don: he sceal bion wið ðara agyltendra unðeawas upahæfen for ðæm andan his ryhtwisnesse, & ðætte he on nænegum ðingum hine beteran ne do ðæm godum; & ðeah ðonne he ongieta ða scylda ðara ðweortiemena, ðonne geðence he ðone ealdordom his onwealdes; & eft ongean ða godan & ða wellibbendan forso he his ealdordom suæ suide ðæt he on allum ðingum ða ðe him underðiedde sien læte him gelice, & ne wene he nanes ðinges hine selfne beteran; & eft wið ða wiðerweardan ne ondræde he ðæt he begonge his ryhtwisnesse[.]⁸⁰

The chapter contains further advice on how to be a good ruler, how to govern well and how to avoid the pitfalls that come with authority. Again, the ruler is admonished to act as role model when Gregory quotes St Peter: 'We are no rulers of this people, but we are set as an example to our flock.'⁸¹ Kingship is recast in a Christian framework and the king is expected to mould himself within its conventions.

The necessity of adhering to Christian principles of kingship is further strengthened and emphasised by a unique achievement: the divine institution of kingship. Although kings had been kings before they were Christianised, the Church succeeded in 're-inventing' kingship as God-given.⁸² Thus, kings did not ascend to the throne because of their own merits or because of a particular line of descent, but rather because God had willed it. The king's right to exist now depended upon God's mercy and favour; it could be as easily given as withdrawn. From very early on, this fact is instilled upon the kings:

Propter hoc omnipotens Deus bonos quosque ad populorum regimina perducit, ut per eos omnibus, quibus praelati fuerint, dona suae pietatis impendat. Quod in Anglorum gente factum cognouimus, cui uestra gloria idcirco est praeposita, ut per bona, quae uobis concessa sunt, etiam subiectae uobis genti superna beneficia praestarentur.⁸³

It seems almost brash that Pope Gregory attributes Æthelberht's kingship to God's intervention, neglecting the fact that Æthelberht had been king some time before he converted. What Gregory does in this letter, however, is state that kingship without divine approval is illegitimate, an issue that would later be elaborated and contested. Most of the surviving correspondences between the episcopate and kings emphasise this God-given kingship, thereby giving the instructions and educational attempts of the Church valid authority.

One of the main means to convey instructions and advice was the letter, written by the clergy and addressed to kings – whether or not kings followed them is quite another matter. Most of the extant letters date from the eighth century and the very first text in the *Fürstenspiegel* genre is written by Cathwulf (775); the clergy, after successfully converting the Anglo-Saxons and instituting Christian kingship, now turned their intellectual endeavours to instructing kings on correct royal behaviour. The letters focus on admonishing kings to abstain from sin and return to the path of virtue.⁸⁴ Alcuin, for example, maintained a continuing interest in Anglo-Saxon matters while serving Charlemagne in his palace school, and frequently exhorted kings to follow Christian rules.⁸⁵ Being a teacher himself he knew about the importance of wisdom and learning.

In a letter to Offa, he spoke of his delight at Offa's eagerness to encourage reading so that wisdom is once again promoted in Mercia.⁸⁶ In another letter to Eardwulf of Northumbria (AD 796), Alcuin is even more direct in regard to the necessity of education:

Erudi te ipsum primo in omni bonitate et sobrietate; postea gentem, cui praeesse videris, in omni modestia vitae et vestitus, in omni veritate fidei et iudiciorum, in observatione mandatorum Dei et honestate morum.⁸⁷

Again, the king's duty as role model is emphasised, as is the importance of having an educated king. Only he who lives according to his own precepts can promote them among others.

Case Study VI: Abdicating Kings (Wessex)

One unique feature of Anglo-Saxon kingship in the seventh and eighth centuries was the phenomenon of so-called 'monk kings'. Several kings abdicated either to spend the rest of their lives in a monastery or to go on pilgrimage to Rome and end their days there. While this practice is not unknown among the early continental kings, it was not followed with such fervour nor out of the same reason. Some Merovingian kings, for example, were tonsured by force and banned into a monastery due to political reasons: they either posed a threat to the current king or proved unable to rule efficiently.⁸⁸

Altogether, up to the end of the eighth century, there were eleven kings who left throne and kingdom for the religious life. Six withdrew to a monastery: Sigeberht of East Anglia (630/631; HE, III.18), Centwine of Wessex (685),⁸⁹ Æthelred of Mercia (704; HE, V.24), Sæbbi of Essex (693/694; HE, IV.11), Ceolwulf of Northumbria (ASC D 737) and Eadberht of Northumbria (ASC D 758/757); the remaining five went to Rome: Cædwalla of Wessex (688; HE, V.7), Cenred of Mercia (709; HE, V.19), Offa of Essex (709; HE, V.19), Ine of Wessex (726; HE, V.7) and Sigeric of Essex (ASC F 798). The practice of going to Rome on pilgrimage continued throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, although this became less frequent: Æthelwulf of Wessex went there in 855, probably accompanied by his son and later king Alfred, as did Cnut in 1027 or 1031. The reasons for leaving throne and kingdom behind were manifold: Sigeberht of East Anglia and Sæbbi of Essex, for example, were from the outset more suited to a contemplative life; Cædwalla's pilgrimage might be a further fulfilment of a vow to God for granting him success in battles and the Wessex throne; Æthelred of Mercia's retirement could be understood as penance for his disrespect for God and Christianity during his reign (HE, IV.12); Cenred of Mercia and Offa of Essex's pilgrimage might have been due to political upheaval; and Centwine of Wessex's abdication might have been a result of Cædwalla's claims to the throne. The remaining kings might have undertaken this step because of old age and so as to make way for a younger successor.⁹⁰

The ultimate reason behind these decisions must be sought in the conversion to Christianity. Already the mission in itself differed markedly from similar endeavours on the Continent.⁹¹ Pope Gregory explicitly tells his missionaries not to destroy existing temples, but to adapt them to the requirements of the new religion. Similarly, existing customs and traditions were incorporated into Christianity instead of being destroyed and banned.

Accordingly, it was rather easy for kings to maintain the (Germanic) priestly character of kingship and translate it into the Christian concept of kingship.⁹² The decision to become a monk after having been a king might have been understood as a natural expression of the sacral side of kingship and hence as natural next step for a king to undertake. An additional inspiration was provided by Irish contemporaries.⁹³ Yet the Roman tradition required that kings enforce Christianity among their people because as earthly rulers they were responsible for the religious as well as secular sphere.⁹⁴ This could hardly be accomplished when kings abdicated, and so rulers had to remain on their throne while turning their mind to spiritual things. As Gregory stated, one can: 'wear secular dress, while not having a secular mind. For necessity binds men like this in the world'.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the primary role that Christianity had assigned to kings was that of defender of the Church and the Faith, a role which could not be fulfilled if kings chose the spiritual life instead.⁹⁶

Kings of the late seventh and early eighth centuries might have found inspiration for such a step in the desire to model themselves on those kings who had abdicated to conclude their life in contemplation.⁹⁷ Bede appears to appreciate this decision, although one wonders to what extent he adapted his personal view to suit King Ceolwulf who was once forced into a monastery.⁹⁸ Quite another source of inspiration is the force of religious themes in Old English Christian poetry.⁹⁹ Religious teaching and many sermons focused on the life after death and how to attain the Heavenly Kingdom, and both themes were also addressed in vernacular poems such as *The Wanderer* and *Soul and Body*. It might be due to the expression of Christian themes in Germanic heroic terms which struck a chord with kings and contributed to their desire to turn towards a spiritual life. The poetic rendering of heavenly bliss set alongside the heroic code in the poems might have appealed to kings as the natural conclusion to a successful life. Heavenly honours as reward for earthly achievements were certainly desirable in a society that based many of its norms on reputation.

While Christianity contributed to kings becoming monks, it was also responsible for the phenomenon dying out. The seventh century was the time of conversion while the eighth century was the time of consolidation. Christianity was now firmly rooted in society, with its rules and norms well established. Kings had thus fulfilled their role of leading their people towards the new religion by being instructors and role models. The retirement to a monastery as a suitable course for nobles and royals seemed to have lost its fascination as fewer and fewer were willing to enter the religious life, and forceful abdication became less of an option.¹⁰⁰ The events of the ninth century also contributed to an altered conception of Christian kingship. The continuous Viking attacks required a strong leader to defend the people physically and not spiritually. The understanding of the king as protector and defender of the Church, as promoted by the Church, was put to the test and rooted all the firmer in the concept of kingship, thereby replacing the focus on the spiritual life. Kingship was perceived more and more as an office that entailed certain duties; leaving the throne was not part of them. The notion of God-given kingship took a firmer hold in the ninth century, as is evidenced in the king's insistence on being instituted because of God and not because of personal merit. Such a favour cannot be cast aside, even for a life of Christian contemplation; any denial of this God-given responsibility constitutes an act of severe disobedience. After all, kings are set on a throne for a reason and thus have to remain kings and fulfil the divine command. With kings

becoming more aware of the requirements of their office, they sought to integrate the spiritual and the secular without abdicating, one obvious example being King Alfred the Great. The phenomenon of ‘monk kings’, then, was a reflection of the ‘Golden Age of Christianity’, as Bede implies (HE, IV.2 & V.23), but it was a movement destined to end as soon as Christianity was firmly established and kings perceived their kingship as office and God-given.

Case Study VII: Saintly Royalty (Northumbria)

When investigating early medieval kingship, the notion of sacral kingship (*Sakralkönigtum*) inevitably emerges. Although being addressed by various scholars from different fields, to date no consensus has been reached on this subject. Several issues are involved: the priestly dimension of the pagan (Germanic) king; the transition from pagan to Christian kingship; the sacral dimension of the Christian king; and the Church’s influence in maintaining or abolishing this dimension. To avoid any confusion from the beginning, it is important to make some introductory remarks about the terminology. ‘Sacral’ and ‘sacrality’ refer to religious aspects that are inherent whereas ‘sacred’ refers to objects, things or persons specifically dedicated to some religious purpose. It is the association with a god or an object of worship that endows holiness. Sanctity is the quality of being sacred and a saint is a person embodying such quality. This difference is essential in discussing the religious aspects of kingship: since sacrality cannot be achieved, it is not immanent to kingship; the utmost a king can achieve is sanctity and thus sainthood. In developing the various consecration rites and anointing rituals, the Church ensured its participation in king-making, but it also redefined and limited the religious aspects of kingship.¹⁰¹ The designated king received his office from the clergy and the rite confirmed the divinely conferred powers with which he ought to carry out his office; thus, ‘the consecrated king was the church’s model of desacralised rulership’.¹⁰² Saintliness, on the other hand, could be achieved by leading an exemplary life, and, almost more importantly, by the widespread promotion after the prospective saint’s death and popular acceptance of the cult.¹⁰³ Theoretically, everyone could achieve sainthood; kingship was no condition for that status.

Tribal chiefs and kings of the pagan Germanic period possessed some religious functions that might allow for a characterisation as priest-kings. These religious functions were intrinsically tied to the office of kingship, thus endowing the ruler with a sacral character. The king became the *Heilsträger* of his people, he embodied their ‘luck’; the fate of the kingdom was inextricably linked with that of the king.¹⁰⁴ With Christianity, that priestly function of the king came into conflict with the ecclesiastical concepts of priesthood and kingship. The separation of both spheres was clear-cut and distinct, and the Church struggled to assert its authority in this matter.¹⁰⁵ The early kings might have found it difficult to relinquish their hold on religion, and the endeavours of the Church in the seventh century in Anglo-Saxon England reflect the process of changing the royal attitude. The religious responsibility of the ruler was not exhausted in providing ‘luck’ for his people; it extended to ensuring that his people followed a certain cult. It is precisely this duty that the Christian Church adopted for its own ends: the ruler was not only required to lead his people to the Christian Faith, but consequentially to suppress any instance of

heresy. It is thus not the sacrality of the ruler that outlasted the conversion from paganism to Christianity, but rather the ruler's *Kultverantwortung* (cultic responsibility).¹⁰⁶ This duty is emphasised in several letters to the early converted Anglo-Saxon kings. Pope Gregory writes to King Æthelberht of Kent that:

illum retributorem inuenias in caelo, cuius nomen atque cognitionem dilataueris in terra. Ipse enim uestrae quoque gloriae nomen etiam posteris gloriosius reddet, cuius uos honorem quaeritis et seruatis in gentibus.¹⁰⁷

Pope Boniface V is rather fierce in his letter to King Edwin of Northumbria, exhorting him to refrain from idolatrous worship of man-made clay gods:

Qua ergo mentis deceptione eos deos, quibus uos ipsi imaginem corporis tradidistis, colentes sequimini, iudicio discreto reperire non possumus. Unde oportet uos, suscepto signo sanctae crucis[.] [I]niectisque manibus hos, quos eatenus materiae conpage uobis deos fabricastis, confringendos diminuendosque summopere procurate.[. . .] [D]aemoniorum sensibus, expulsaque a uobis sollicitatione uenenosi et deceptibilis hostis, per aquam et Spiritum Sanctum renati ei, cui credideritis, in splendore gloriae sempiternae cohabitare, eius opitulante munificentia ualeatis.¹⁰⁸

The strategy is clear: once the king has been converted, his people will follow naturally, not only because the ruler is the role model, but also because it is his responsibility that they do.

There were two incentives for the pagan kings to convert; one lay in the promise of eternal glory and the other in divine assistance for their royal undertakings. The latter was put to the test by Edwin of Northumbria: when he escaped an attempted assassination ordered by Cwichhelm, a West-Saxon ruler (c.626–636), Edwin vowed to God that he would renounce his idols and convert if God would grant him victory over the West-Saxons, and also pledged that his daughter would be consecrated a nun (HE, II.9). Edwin is indeed successful in war and converts, though not after some to-ing and fro-ing (HE, II.12). The model of Christian kingship that was put before the early Anglo-Saxon kings was thus a rather simple one: convert and God grants whatever you wish for, and in turn you are responsible for spreading His word. However, rulers relinquished more than they had bargained for: they lost the religious dimension of their office to the priesthood and became dependent on ecclesiastical direction in significant areas of politics. Many duties of the king were also Christianised. Warfare, for example, could not be forbidden but instead it was re-defined as warfare in the name of God against offenders of the Church. Such 'holy wars' enabled kings to (potentially) gain sanctity, but their sacrality was lost.

Anglo-Saxon England is rich in royal saints. Susan Ridyard has already noted the ubiquity and persistence of royal saints and remarked on the frequency with which new cults emerged.¹⁰⁹ There are two Anglo-Saxon texts that list the resting places of Anglo-Saxon saints, one of which is devoted solely to the Kentish ones.¹¹⁰ In total, they mention 89 saints, of which all but one rest in Anglo-Saxon England and all but ten were Anglo-Saxon saints.¹¹¹ Given their prominent status in life, a royal person is the obvious choice for a cult. A cult's establishment and maintenance, however, rests with the survivors and ultimately with their motives in promoting a cult. Politically, royal saints invest their earthly relative with an aura of sanctity and glorify the way he conducts his kingship. As

status symbol, they endow the whole dynasty with holiness and guarantee the continuance of divine favour. On the other hand, the prominence of cults of murdered royal saints served to emphasise the guilt of the murderer(s), so that the veneration of a royal saint was a means to discourage regicides.¹¹² In such cases, a saint's cult would be utilised to retain the crimes in current memory, making it difficult for the beneficiary of that crime to legitimise their gains. The cults of royal saints serve different ends, depending on the motives of those who promote that particular cult.¹¹³

In a study of saint-kings in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, Karol Górski attributes the rise of saint-kings to the respective authority of their kingship: the weaker it is, the more inclined the Church would be to promote a saint cult; in the presence of a strong monarchy, the Church would not take such actions.¹¹⁴ Although this approach has been rejected on the grounds of Górski's 'misinterpretation of the functional relationship of the "feudal Church" to secular power',¹¹⁵ its attraction lies in its focus on religious versus secular authority. Not every cult originated in ecclesiastical promotion or for a political end, but in cases where it did one must ask why the Church would be interested in promoting a royal to sainthood or refusing to do so. One obvious answer is land and money: a monastery that housed the relics of a royal saint would benefit greatly from kings who would venerate their ancestor. The Church would thus be obliged either to support that king or dynasty and thereby strengthen his political position, or else to lose revenue and influence. After all, the Church would gain nothing from failing kings and unstable politics. The non-promotion of royal cults, on the other hand, might be the result of an extreme rise of royal power that threatened to eclipse ecclesiastical authority and thus destroy the, at times fragile, balance between the two spheres. Ecclesiastical intervention with regard to royal cults, then, is another factor in the theory of theocratic kingship. While the Church did not ultimately decide who became king, it did determine who became a saint, which can be a powerful instrument in times of political upheaval. Górski furthermore argues that the promotion of royal saint cults also helps state-formation processes.¹¹⁶ Here, the political motivation is most obvious: a saint in the family would be a major advantage in dynastic power struggles. The legitimacy and throne-right of that particular royal family has already been confirmed through the highest authority by making one member a saint. State formation rests, therefore, on the ability of a royal house to maintain the throne, and the Church is closely involved again since it is only with their approval that a royal can be made a saint.

Saint-kings were an overall phenomenon in the medieval period. There is, however, a distinct change in the concept: in the early Middle Ages, saint-kings were either martyrs, having died innocently and sometimes unresistingly, or monks, having abdicated and thus abandoned their kingdom.¹¹⁷ Kingship and saintliness were mutually exclusive, and kings had appropriated an attribute and status that was usually reserved for particularly religious persons. The nature of kingship itself changed too: it gained a more positive attitude and the divine conferral was perceived as favour rather than as duty. The positive appreciation of the royal office then also changed the attitude towards saint-kings. Bede is ambivalent towards the monk kings in his *Ecclesiastical History*, who, although deeply religious, do not fulfil their duty.¹¹⁸ One exception seems to be King Oswald of Northumbria, who is the first king to correspond to the ecclesiastically favoured model of saintly kingship: being deeply religious and an active king is no contradiction anymore, and Oswald earns his sainthood by fulfilling his royal duty instead of renouncing it.¹¹⁹ The

changing nature of kingship is also reflected in the role model character of royal saints. The active fulfilment of their office and their subsequent veneration as saint set the standard of behaviour for all later kings.¹²⁰

Conclusion

The analysis of a range of political features of early Anglo-Saxon England has shown that early medieval political thought is far more complex than one would assume. What has emerged is that early Anglo-Saxon political concepts were an amalgam of Germanic heritage, continental influences and Christian ideas. It also appears that kings adapted to any given situation and were well able to manage and manipulate their resources accordingly. Joint kingship, for example, is not an Anglo-Saxon invention. From Pippin onwards, Carolingian kings crowned their sons during their lifetime and gave them a part of the realm to govern. In Francia, this led to several divisions of the realm and fostered jealousies and ruthless ambitions among the co-rulers. In Essex, however, joint kingship was a successful governmental model, satisfying the ambitions of young æthelings but keeping the kingdom's structure territorially intact.

Most of the political features discussed here were either directly or indirectly the result of the Conversion. The missionaries brought not only a new religion, but also a new system in which that religion was inscribed: writing. Writing allowed for the orally transmitted laws to be recorded and so anchored in time. It changed kingship in so far as it turned the promulgation of law codes into an essential royal duty, into an essential dimension of kingship. The increasing amount of laws concerning ecclesiastical matters also reveals that kings perceived themselves as responsible in these matters, in contrast to the Gelasian principle and St John of Damascus' dictum, for example. Hence, it became necessary to educate kings so that Christian conceptions of kingship were incorporated into their political understanding. Furthermore, Christian kings were held responsible for the welfare of their people, physically as well as morally, and to be able to correct them, kings would need guidance and instruction. Abdicating to pursue a religious life was treated with a mixture of admiration and unease, and the phenomenon of monk kings died out when kings began to perceive their office as divine favour. Another phenomenon, that of royal saints, also emerged in the early Anglo-Saxon period. While these cults might not have been predominantly political in their conception, they exemplified a notion of kingship that was not irreconcilable with deep religiosity: a king was venerated as saint because of his kingship, not despite of it.

The seven case studies show that many of the political features of the later Anglo-Saxon period, even some that might be regarded as unique to the later period, had their origin in the early Anglo-Saxon era. The necessity of education and instruction, for example, was neither first proclaimed by Alfred the Great nor even later by King Edgar, but in the early seventh century. The understanding of kingship as divine favour rather than hereditary birth-right also originated in the seventh century, although it was the tenth-century reformers who expounded it most forcefully. This examination also shows the growing influence of Christianity on royal authority and the development towards a theocratic form of government. There was a change in the perception of God's 'interference': while the convert kings of the seventh century all but demanded divine miracles before converting,

later kings would have to prove good kingship before God would bestow any favours. Kingship came to be perceived as God-given, and it depended on God's will and the king's abilities to retain it. This changing notion and its impact on issues of royal authority is more prevalent in the later Anglo-Saxon period, and its development can be analysed by reference to a new instrument of royal power: the charter.

Notes

- ¹ That this is based on Hellenistic tradition and Roman legal practice is shown by Claire Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion: Some Comparisons Between the Roman Mission to England and Patrick's to Ireland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 13 (1980), pp. 59–94, here pp. 60f.
- ² Gregory's plan for the new Anglo-Saxon church had been optimistic rather than realistic: of the suggested 24 dioceses and two metropolitan sees (HE, I. 29), Augustine managed to establish four (Canterbury, London, Rochester and York), and even Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury, the great reformer, was only able to raise the number up to fourteen. See John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 79f. For a list of Anglo-Saxon bishops, see Appendix 2 'Anglo-Saxon Archbishops'.
- ³ Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 74f.
- ⁴ Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, p. 74.
- ⁵ Blair *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, p. 77.
- ⁶ Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 81f.
- ⁷ Cf. the letters by Abbess Eangyth and her daughter Heaburg (Bugga) to Boniface (Ephraim Emerton, trsl., *The Letters of Saint Boniface* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1940], no. 6) and Lul to Coena (Æthelberht), archbishop of York (EHD I no. 188).
- ⁸ Please see the excellent accounts in D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings* (London: Routledge, 2000, revised edition), Frank M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, 3rd edition), James Campbell, Eric John and Patrick Wormald (eds.), *The Anglo-Saxons* (London: Penguin, 1991, new edition) and the ASC as translated in EHD I.
- ⁹ See J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), ch. 1 for a discussion on Germanic kingship.
- ¹⁰ Archaeology, onomastics and place-name studies have advanced knowledge considerably; the investigation of burial sites such as Finglesham in East Kent, Mucking in Essex, Buckland in Kent and, of course, Sutton Hoo in East Anglia all offer information that shed light on this period. More recently, the treasure hoards of North Yorkshire (a grave site near Redcar, 2007) and Staffordshire (near Burntwood, 2009) testify to a flourishing society. Place-name studies allow for the (re-)discovery of former settlement areas and thus of the original or early inhabited provinces and regions. Tracing back modern English place-names also helps when investigating charter bounds: land grants, and thus the ownership of land, demonstrate how territories and territorial affiliations changed throughout time, thus offering information on political circumstances. See, for example, Steven Bassett (ed.), *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms: Studies in the Early History of Britain* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989); Barbara Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London: BA Seaby, 1992, 2nd edition), and Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxons*.
- ¹¹ Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 8.
- ¹² Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p. 13.
- ¹³ T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'Early Medieval Kingdoms in the British Isles', pp. 28f, in Bassett, *Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, pp. 28–39 and 245–248. Of course, not every village could be visited on the itinerary, especially in larger kingdoms, so that the renders might have been exacted in the form of livestock or money (p. 32). See David Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), pp. 82ff, for the itineraries of Anglo-Saxon kings.

- ¹⁴ The amount depended on the hide assessment. The *hide* was the conventional amount of assessment, although its size varied throughout Anglo-Saxon times and it cannot be satisfactorily equated with any modern measurement. The yields of one hide are usually taken to provide enough sustenance for one family unit. Charles-Edwards (*Early Medieval Kingdoms*, pp. 30f) points to the fact that certain aspects of that food-rent, like cattle, was probably rendered annually instead of at the time of the royal visit. Similarly, food-renderings had to be flexible to some extent since not all items were equally available in all parts of a kingdom. The duty of 'entertaining' the king (*convivium regis*) is mentioned in at least two charters, S 92 (Æthelbald, king of Mercia, to the minsters and churches of Mercia, 749) and S 1257 (Bishop Hathored of the Hwicce to Offa, king of Mercia, 781).
- ¹⁵ Charles-Edwards, *Early Medieval Kingdoms*, p. 32.
- ¹⁶ I exclude Wessex. See Wendy Davies and Hayo Vierck, 'The Context of Tribal Hidage: Social Aggregates and Settlement Patterns', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 8 (1974), pp. 223–293. Nicholas Higham argues that the Hidage is in fact a Northumbrian tribute list and was used by Edwin (*An English Empire. Bede and the Early Anglo-Saxon Kings* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995], ch. 3).
- ¹⁷ HE, V.10: 'The Old Saxons have no king but only a number of viceroys who are set over the people and, when at any time war is about to break out, they cast lots impartially and all follow and obey the one on whom the lot falls, for the duration of the war. When the war is over, they all become viceroys of equal rank again.' This procedure is reminiscent of equal statements by Caesar (*Bello Gallico*, VI.23) and Tacitus (*Germania*, ch. 7).
- ¹⁸ Higham, *English Empire*, p. 115.
- ¹⁹ Higham, *English Empire*, p. 116.
- ²⁰ One notable and laudable exception is Barbara Yorke's *Kings and Kingdoms*.
- ²¹ The traditional division into the 'heptarchy' of East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Mercia, Wessex and Northumbria cannot be maintained throughout the period. As kingdoms dissolve and re-emerge, so political landscapes change. The fluctuating fates of kingdoms is illustrated in the sources, and it is due to them that the subsequent discussion will focus on the seven established kingdoms. See D. N. Dumville, 'Essex, Middle Anglia, and the Expansion of Mercia in the South-east Midlands', pp. 123–140, particularly 123–127, in Bassett, *Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, pp. 123–140.
- ²² The division of Kent into a western and eastern part existed long before the two dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury were established (Barbara Yorke, 'Joint Kingship in Kent c.560 to 785', *Archaeologica Cantiana* 99 (1983), pp. 1–19, here p. 5). Norfolk and Suffolk in East Anglia were (and are) separated by the river Waveney. The division(s) in Sussex had been the result of tribal boundaries, e.g., the *Hæstingas* in the east (Susan E. Kelly [ed.], *Charters of Selsey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 6 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998], pp. lxxivf).
- ²³ Barbara Yorke, 'The Kingdom of the East Saxons', *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985) pp. 1–36, here pp. 3f.
- ²⁴ '*De Regibus Orientalium Seaxonum*. Offa Sighering; Sighere Sigberhting; Sigberht S[awear]d ing; Saweard Saberhting; Saberht Sledging; Sle[dd] Æscwining; Æscwine Offing; Offa Bedcing; Bedca [Sigefugling]; Sigefugl Swæpping; Swæppa Antsecging; Ants[ecg] Gesecging; Gesecg Seaxneting. *Item de Regibus Orientalium Seaxonum*. Swiðred Sigemunding; Sigemund Sigeharding; Si[gehard] Sebbing; Sebbe Seaxreding; Seaxred Sab[erhting]; Saberht Sledging. *Item de Regibus Orientalium Seaxo[num]*. Sigered Sigericing; Sigeric Selering; Selered Sigberhting; Sigberht Sigeb[alding]; Sigebald Seleferðing; Seleferð Sigeferðing; Sigeferð Seaxing; Seaxa Sledging. ðonan forð[]' (text from Yorke, *Kingdom of the East Saxons*, p. 4, with additional information from Henry Sweet [ed.], *The Oldest English Texts*, EETS o.s. 83 [London: Oxford University Press, 1966], p. 179; trsl. K.McC.).
- ²⁵ As Bede relates, Æthelberht's nephew Sæberht 'ruled over the nation although he was under the dominion of Æthelberht' (HE, II.3). Cf. also ASC 604.
- ²⁶ The third son of Sæberht is unnamed, but it could be Seaxbald who might also be father of Swithelm (Yorke, *Kingdom of the East Saxons*, p. 19).

- ²⁷ Table compiled with information from Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, pp. 51f, and *Kingdom of the East Saxons*, p. 17.
- ²⁸ Cf. HE, III.30. Sigehere associated himself with Cædwalla of Wessex, and Sæbbi and his sons with Æthelred of Mercia.
- ²⁹ The scribe of that charter also wrongly styles him Offa of Mercia which is rectified to Offa of Essex. The land grant in Mercia is probably evidence of some Essex–Mercian alliance connection as might be the very name of the Essex king, Offa. Cf. Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of St Paul's, London*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 10 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 142.
- ³⁰ Yorke, *Joint Kingship*, p. 17.
- ³¹ In 787, Offa crowns his son Ecgrith, following in Charlemagne's footsteps, but Ecgrith dies soon after his father and a distant kingsman succeeds to the throne (Coenwulf). Alcuin suggests that Ecgrith died for the bloodshed of his father, implying that Offa systematically purged near kindred to secure the throne for his son. Cf. EHD I no. 202.
- ³² S 42–50, 108, 158, 230, 232, 403, 506, 616, 872, 1172, 1173, 1178, 1183, 1184, 1206, 1291 and 1435.
- ³³ Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, p. xxxi.
- ³⁴ Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, pp. xlv–l.
- ³⁵ Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, p. lxxiv.
- ³⁶ Martin Welch, *Early Anglo-Saxon Sussex*. B.A.R. British Series 112 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1983), p. 270 (charters featuring names in Æthel- and/or Os-: S 42, 44, 46–50, 108, 1178, 1183 and 1184).
- ³⁷ It is usually assumed that these two names refer to one and the same individual with Nunna being a contracted version of Nothhelm.
- ³⁸ See Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, pp. lxxiii–lxxxiv.
- ³⁹ According to Stephen of Ripon, Sussex was unconquerable because of its rocky coast and thick forests (*Life of Wilfrid*, ch. 41).
- ⁴⁰ *Life of Wilfrid* ch. 41. While Bede acknowledges Æthelwealh's baptism before Wilfrid's arrival, Stephen silently passes over this fact and makes Wilfrid baptise the king.
- ⁴¹ *Life of Wilfrid*, ch. 42. Cædwalla was probably exiled because he posed a threat for the current Wessex king Centwine, especially when Cædwalla began to contend for the throne. See ASC 685.
- ⁴² Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, pp. 3–13.
- ⁴³ It is difficult to read meaning into forged charters because of their very inauthenticity. Nevertheless, a foundation charter by Æthelwealh might have carried more weight since it would have been older. On the other hand, neglecting the Sussex king might point to the unimportant status of the whole kingdom as such and the scribe might have felt that the Sussex legitimisation would not carry the same weight as a Wessex one.
- ⁴⁴ King Osmund granted land without confirmation of a Mercian overlord (S 49), which is later confirmed by Offa (Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, pp. lxxxv and 43–46).
- ⁴⁵ Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, pp. lxxiv and lxxxv.
- ⁴⁶ S 48 (AD 762 for 765) and 49 (AD 770) were issued while Osmund was still king, although S 48 does not contain any title and S 49 does so only in the witness list. This seems to be particular to Sussex charters (see Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, pp. liif). The grantors of S 50 (AD 760 x 771) are likewise styled *rex* while those of S 1178, 1183 and 1184 are all referred to as *dux Suthsaxonum*.
- ⁴⁷ Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, pp. lxxxiv and 46–53. Oslac did not claim the higher status, however. Although Susan Kelly says that charters did not automatically require confirmation by any overlord, it was in the beneficiary's interest to achieve confirmation by the highest authority possible, lest the grant might be contested.
- ⁴⁸ Kelly, *Selsey Charters*, p. lxxxiv, and ASC 825.
- ⁴⁹ Philip Grierson and Mark Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage: With a Catalogue of the Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*. Vol. 1: *The Early Middle Ages: 5th to 10th centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 156. The following two paragraphs summarise their discussion on pp. 156–187 and 267–275.
- ⁵⁰ II Athelstan § 14 (c.926–930), III Edgar § 8 (959–963), III Æthelred § 8 & 8.1 (c.997), II Cnut § 8, 8.1 & 8.2 (1020–1023).

- ⁵¹ Table 21 in Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, p. 269, offers a list of kings and archbishops of Anglo-Saxon England, c.760–924, known to have issued coins.
- ⁵² See, e.g., Ian Stewart, 'The London Mint and the Coinage of Offa', pp. 30f, in Mark Blackburn (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History: Essays in Memory of Michael Dolley* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), pp. 27–43, for a schematic depiction of Kentish and East Anglian moneyers who worked for Offa and other kings.
- ⁵³ Gareth Williams, 'Mercian Coinage and Authority', p. 223, in Michelle Brown and Carol A. Farr (eds.), *Mercia. An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 210–228.
- ⁵⁴ Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, p. 278.
- ⁵⁵ Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, pp. 278f.
- ⁵⁶ Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, pp. 280f. Cf. Pope Leo III's letter to King Coenwulf of Mercia in 798 in which that promise is mentioned (EHD I no. 205).
- ⁵⁷ Williams, *Mercian Coinage*, p. 212.
- ⁵⁸ See Williams (*Mercian Coinage*, p. 210) for a photograph of the coins issued by Æthelberht and Offa.
- ⁵⁹ Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, p. 286.
- ⁶⁰ Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, p. 284. See also ASC 829 and 830.
- ⁶¹ Ep. 185 ch. 5.19 (PL 33 col. 801f): 'For a man serves God in one way in that he is man, in another way in that he is also king. In that he is man, he serves Him by living faithfully; but in that he is also king, he serves Him by enforcing with suitable rigor such laws as ordain what is righteous, and punish what is the reverse' (trsl. J. R. King, 'Writings in Connection With the Donatist Controversy', p. 640, in Philip Schaff [ed.], *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. First Series, Vol. 1* [Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1987], pp. 633–651).
- ⁶² For a thorough discussion of these topics, see Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century. Vol.1: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 93–101, and *The First Code of English Law* (Canterbury: The Canterbury Commemoration Society, 2005).
- ⁶³ Cf. EHD I no. 29.
- ⁶⁴ Wormald, *Making of English Law*, p. 95.
- ⁶⁵ 'The property of God and the Church [is to be paid for] with a twelve-fold compensation; a bishop's property with an eleven-fold compensation; a priest's property with a nine-fold compensation; a deacon's property with a six-fold compensation; a cleric's property with a three-fold compensation; the peace of the Church with a two-fold compensation; the peace of a meeting with a two-fold compensation' (trsl. EHD I no. 29).
- ⁶⁶ As Hlothhere and Eadric state in their prologue, their laws are meant as addendum to the decrees of their forefathers. They thus do not say more on Church and State, but rather add to the list of cases where compensations might be due. However, they shed light on another aspect: Kent had economic interests in London, big enough for Kentish traders there to be protected by law. See § 16, EHD I no. 30.
- ⁶⁷ So, for example, II and III Edgar and VII Æthelred (in EHD I nos. 40 and 45).
- ⁶⁸ See *Life Wilfrid* ch. 17 and 24, and the complaints in various letters by, e.g., Bede to Egbert (EHD I no. 170) and Pope Paul I to Eadberht of Northumbria (EHD I no. 184).
- ⁶⁹ § 2: 'The [breach of] the Church's protection is to be 50 shillings like the king's.' § 16: 'The word of the bishop and the king without an oath is to be incontrovertible' (trsl. EHD I no. 31).
- ⁷⁰ So, for example, in several letters: Lul to Coena (Æthelberht), archbishop of York (EHD I no. 188), Pope John VIII to Æthelred, archbishop of Canterbury (EHD I no. 222), Boniface to Æthelbald, king of Mercia (EHD I no. 177) and Abbess Eangyth and her daughter Heaburg (Bugga) to Boniface (Emerton, *Letters of St Boniface*, no. 6).
- ⁷¹ As Christ's deputy on earth, this royal duty is even more pronounced. See also William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), pp. 185f.
- ⁷² Wormald, *Making of English Law*, p. 103.

- ⁷³ 'And the king is to be prayed for, and they are to honour him of their own free will without compulsion' (trsl. EHD I no. 31).
- ⁷⁴ Cf. V Athelstan and VII Æthelred. Chaney also notes that it is now the Church interceding with God on the king's behalf instead of the (pagan) king himself interceding with the gods for his people (*Cult of Kingship*, pp. 204f).
- ⁷⁵ HE, III.18: 'when he returned to his own land to become king, he at once sought to imitate some of the excellent institutions which he had seen in Gaul, and established a school where boys could be taught letters, with the help of Bishop Felix, who had come to him from Kent and who provided him with masters and teachers as in the Kentish school'.
- ⁷⁶ Nicholas Orme, 'School Founders and Patrons in England, 597–1560', *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95744>; accessed April 2017). For a general assessment of Anglo-Saxon schooling and learning, see Patrizia Lendinara, 'The World of Anglo-Saxon Learning', in Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 264–281.
- ⁷⁷ See, e.g., *Precepts* ll. 61–64, *Distichs of Cato* nos. A, 9, 18, 41, 56, 58, 59 and 71 (Cox numbering), *Maxims* I ll. 45b–49.
- ⁷⁸ E.g., Æthelwealh of Sussex, Edwin of Northumbria and Æthelberht of Kent.
- ⁷⁹ *Life of Wilfrid*, ch. 19: 'Now in those days, the pious King Ecgrith [of Northumbria], and his most blessed Queen Aethilthryth [. . .] were both obedient to Bishop Wilfrid in all things, and there ensued, by the aid of God, peace and joy among the people, fruitful years and victory over their foes. [. . .] so when King Ecgrith lived in peace with our bishop, the kingdom, as many bear witness, was increased on every hand by his glorious victories; but when the agreement between them was destroyed, and his queen was separated from him and dedicated herself to God, the king's triumph came to an end during his own lifetime.' See also ch. 24.
- ⁸⁰ CP ch. 17: 'The ruler must put himself on a level with his subjects: he must be the companions of well-doers from humility; he must be severe with the faults of sinners from righteous zeal, and must not exalt himself above the good; and yet, when he perceives the sins of the perverse, let him consider the authority of his office; and again, with those who lead a good life, let him think so lightly of his authority as to place his subjects on an equality with himself, nor deem himself in any respect their superior; and, again, with the perverse, let him not fear to practise his righteousness' (trsl. Henry Sweet, *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's 'Pastoral Care'*. EETS o.s. 45 and 50 [London: Trübner, 1871–1872], p. 106f).
- ⁸¹ 1 Peter 5.3.
- ⁸² This whole complex must remain brief here, but will be fully analysed in chs. 2 and 5.
- ⁸³ Pope Gregory to Æthelberht, king of Kent (601) in HE, I. 32: 'Almighty God raises up certain good men to be rulers over nations in order that he may by their means bestow the gifts of his righteousness upon all those over whom they are set. We realize that this has happened to the English race over whom your Majesty is placed, so that, by means of the blessings granted to you heavenly benefits may also be bestowed upon your subjects.' A similar sentiment is expressed in *Widsith*, ll. 131–134.
- ⁸⁴ E.g., Boniface to Æthelbald, king of Mercia (EHD I no. 177), Pope Paul I to Eadberht, king of Northumbria, and his brother Egbert, archbishop of York (EHD I no. 184), Alcuin to King Ethelred of Northumbria and his nobles (Stephen Allott [trsl.], *Alcuin of York, c.AD 732–804: His Life and Letters* [York: William Sessions Ltd., 1974], no. 12).
- ⁸⁵ E.g., Allott, *Life and Letters*, nos. 11, 12, 61, 82 and 83.
- ⁸⁶ Allott, *Life and Letters*, no. 38.
- ⁸⁷ Ep. 108: 'First instruct yourself in all goodness and soberness, and then the people you rule in moderation in living and dressing, in truth of belief and judgment, in keeping God's commandments and living rightly' (trsl. Allott, *Life and Letters*, no. 16).
- ⁸⁸ Claire Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', p. 158, in Patrick Wormald (ed.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 154–176. Two continental kings, Carloman, son of Charles Martel, and Ratchis, king

- of the Lombards, followed the Anglo-Saxon model and abdicated voluntarily to pursue a monastic life. See Karl Heinrich Krüger, 'Königskonversionen im 8. Jahrhundert', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 7 (1973), pp. 169–222, esp. pp. 183–202 and 212–217. This case study is only concerned with those kings who appeared to have chosen the religious voluntarily.
- ⁸⁹ Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', pp. 154f.
- ⁹⁰ Bede just states that Cædwalla became king once the sub-kings had been conquered and removed (HE, IV.12). According to Stancliffe ('Kings Who Opted Out', p. 155), an enforced abdication of Centwine is unlikely given the praise in a poem by Aldhelm and addressed to Centwine's daughter: 'Centwine formerly wielded justly the government of the (West) Saxons, until, rejecting the summits of his temporal realm, he abandoned his worldly wealth [...] he set out to seek the holy way of life as he abandoned his hereditary kingdom in the name of Christ; nevertheless, he had previously waged war in three battles, and had likewise brought them to a conclusion with three victories. Thus he ruled his kingdom happily for several years until having been convert, he retired to a holy (monastic) cell' (Aldhelm, *Carmina Ecclesiastica III*, trsl. Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* [Cambridge: Brewer, 1985], p. 47).
- ⁹¹ One might compare the peaceful conversion of the Anglo-Saxons with the sword-and-blood conversion of the continental Saxons.
- ⁹² Chaney, *Cult of Kingship*, ch. 5.
- ⁹³ See Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion', pp. 59–94, and 'Kings Who Opted Out', pp. 161–166.
- ⁹⁴ Stancliffe, 'Kings and Conversion', pp. 60f.
- ⁹⁵ *XL Homiliae in Evangelia* II.36, *PL* LXXVI, cols. 1272–74. (trsl. Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', p. 161).
- ⁹⁶ Despite this 'formal' guidance against abdication for a religious life, Bishop Wilfrid of York as one prominent Rome-admirer, may have inspired royal pilgrimages. See Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', p. 170.
- ⁹⁷ Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', p. 171.
- ⁹⁸ Krüger, *Königskonversionen*, pp. 201f, and Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 91.
- ⁹⁹ Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', pp. 166–168.
- ¹⁰⁰ Stancliffe, 'Kings Who Opted Out', p. 172. One needs to add that the prohibition against lay monasteries also contributed to the decline.
- ¹⁰¹ Janet Nelson, 'Royal Saints and Early Medieval Kingship', p. 72, in Janet Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 1986), pp. 69–74. See also ch. 5.
- ¹⁰² Nelson, 'Royal Saints', p. 73.
- ¹⁰³ Nelson, 'Royal Saints', p. 73.
- ¹⁰⁴ See Chaney, *Cult of Kingship*, ch. 1.
- ¹⁰⁵ This is, for example, evinced by the disputes centring on the lay clerical status of kings.
- ¹⁰⁶ See further Arnold Angenendt, 'Sakralherrschaft und Religionsfrevel. Oder: wer hat das *brachium saeculare* erfunden?' in Franz-Reiner Erkens (ed.), *Das frühmittelalterliche Königtum*, RGA-Ergänzungsband 49 (Berlin and New York: deGruyter, 2005), pp. 376–406, especially in regard the ruler's responsibility of suppressing wrong cults. For Chaney, however, Christianity simply changed the sacral king into a saint (*Cult of Kingship*, p. 81).
- ¹⁰⁷ HE, I.32: 'you may be rewarded in heaven by the One whose name and knowledge you have spread on earth. For He whose honour you seek and maintain among the nations will also make your glorious name still more glorious even to posterity.'
- ¹⁰⁸ HE, II.10: 'We cannot understand in any way how you can be so deluded as to worship and follow those gods to whom you yourselves have given the likeness of the human form. So you should take upon you the sign of the holy cross [...] Then set your hand vigorously to the task of breaking and destroying the gods which up till now you have fashioned from material substances. [...] Then when you have put to flight devilish thoughts and driven from you the temptations of the venomous and deceitful foe, having been born again by water and the Holy Spirit, may you through his bountiful aid dwell with Him in whom you have believed, in the splendour of eternal glory.'
- ¹⁰⁹ Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 3. See also Catherine Cubitt,

- 'Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 423–453, John Blair, 'A Saint for Every Minster? Local Cults in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 455–494, and John Blair, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints', pp. 495–465, all three in Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (eds.), *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- ¹¹⁰ They are edited by Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands*, 1–19. See D. W. Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting Places in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978), pp. 61–93, for a discussion of both texts.
- ¹¹¹ Rollason, 'Saints' Resting Places', p. 61.
- ¹¹² D. W. Rollason, 'The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 11 (1983), pp. 1–22, here pp. 16f. In a convincing argument, Rollason connects this to the Legatine mission in 786 which stressed the damnable act of murdering kings and royal princes.
- ¹¹³ Cf. also Catherine Cubitt, who argues that royal saints' cult originated in lay devotion before being politicised (in: 'Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints', *Early Medieval Europe* 9 [2000], pp. 53–83).
- ¹¹⁴ Karl Górski, 'La naissance des états et le "roi-saint"', in T. Manteuffel and A. Gieysztor (eds.), *L'Europe au IXe au XIe Siècles* (Warsaw: Panstwowe Wydawn Naukowe, 1968), pp. 425–432.
- ¹¹⁵ Nelson, 'Royal Saints', p. 70. Of course, she is right when saying that this approach does not explain the whole phenomenon.
- ¹¹⁶ Górski, *La naissance des états et le 'roi-saint'*, pp. 430–432.
- ¹¹⁷ Nelson, 'Royal Saints', p. 70.
- ¹¹⁸ Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, pp. 92f.
- ¹¹⁹ See the discussion in Cubitt, *Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 424–432.
- ¹²⁰ Nelson, 'Royal Saints', p. 74.

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Diploma Politicum

The *Life of Bishop Wilfrid* by Stephen of Ripon is not only an interesting witness to the conversion in Northumbria in the seventh century and the quarrels between kings and bishops, but also one of the earliest accounts of royal land grants conveyed by charter. After Wilfrid had built the church at Ripon, he invited kings Ecgfrith and Ælfwine to its dedication, as well as sub-kings and other ecclesiastics:

Stans itaque sanctus Wilfrithus episcopus ante altare conversus ad populum, coram regibus enumerans regiones, quas ante reges pro animabus suis et tunc in illa die cum consensus et subscription episcoporum et omnium principum illi dederunt, lucide enuntiavit necnon [. . .] Erat quippe Deo placabile donum, quod religiosi reges tam multas terras Deo ad serviendum pontifici nostro conscripserunt.¹

Colgrave assumes that Stephen wrote the *Life* before 720, and that he was well acquainted with Wilfrid; he may even have invited Stephen to come from Kent to Northumbria.² It is thus likely that Stephen was an eye-witness to many of the events described in his *Vita*, and certainly the conveyance of land by charter was a remarkable act, not only because it was pleasing to God, but because it was with the consent and signatures of the highest officers in the realm. The religious event was also then a show of secular power: only a powerful king could bestow land (and therefore wealth), and only a powerful king could command his subordinates to agree. The charter is the means to demonstrate royal power, and this chapter will show how the ecclesiastical *carta* was transformed into an effective political tool.

Charters are the place where the secular and religious realms meet and merge. The Church influenced secular ideas on rulership, authority and power, but nowhere is this as obvious as in the charters. A new school of thought on diplomatics has opened up a range of new areas of charter research. *Metadiplomatics* ‘is interested in the history of ideas, in politics, in constitutional history and concepts of sovereignty found in various charter formulae’.³ In addition, research into the proems, invocations and subscription lists of charters, for example, might further contribute to an understanding of early medieval political theory as well as the self-image of the ruler. Thus, by their very existence, charters articulate political ideas externally through their documentary nature, and internally

through their various formulae. From the beginning, the charter was predominantly an ecclesiastical instrument to secure land granted to newly established churches. In time, the laity acquired an interest in them and so charters became political tools. They retained much of their original spiritual character, and it is interesting to see how kings appropriated this spirituality to demonstrate their political views.

The Anglo-Saxon charters belong to the genre of the dispositive *carta*,⁴ and as such are 'written declarations meant to serve as evidence of actions of a legal kind, recorded in specific forms, which are, however, changing according to the various persons, times, places and topics concerned'.⁵ The Sawyer concordance lists almost 1900 documents, including royal charters, writs, charters by lay and ecclesiastics as well as lost or incomplete texts.⁶ Of these, about 300 survive as originals.⁷ To prove the authenticity or originality of charters, however, is a confusing task at best. Depending on the rigour of the standards for authenticity researchers set themselves, one charter can be termed spurious by one and authentic by another.⁸

The practice of using charters in Anglo-Saxon England began when Christian missionaries sought to protect the royal gifts of land for their newly founded church by legal documents, following Roman practice. It is still a matter of debate when and by whom charters were introduced to Anglo-Saxon England. Cases have been made for Augustine, Wilfrid and Theodore.⁹ The religious impetus behind their introduction lies in the nature of charters as the most explicit manifestation of the success of the conversion. It is very probable that monks at first sought to protect their newly acquired lands within the legal framework of charters, a well-known practice on the Continent, rather than trusting the fluctuating fortunes (and oaths) of king and kingdom.¹⁰ While it cannot be proven that either Augustine or Theodore brought the charter to England, it is certain that at the end of the seventh century the charter was an established means to document land grants as well as a valid legal document. The charter is thus a unique witness to the integration of the Christian church into Anglo-Saxon society as well as being a consequence thereof.¹¹ The 'ecclesiastical gift of writing',¹² like the new faith, took time to be absorbed into society and to establish itself as a new method of land (and business) transaction. The idea of conveying land by *boc*, and thus making it secure and protecting it from outside interference, required leaving oral tradition behind. The more the church was accepted into early Anglo-Saxon England the more its customs were, so that the charter gained wide currency.

From the outset, then, the Anglo-Saxon charter was conceived as an ecclesiastical document; its characteristics mirroring this context and the religious circumstances of its origin in Anglo-Saxon England. This close connection is visible in its core elements: the invocation (pictorial and verbal), the proem, sanction, anathema and final blessing are all religious features. The Anglo-Saxon charter is unique in that it only confers a *poena spiritualis* in its sanction, since, in its original form as a purely ecclesiastical instrument, this was the only penalty available to the church.¹³ Even when the laity began to use charters for secular land transferrals, the close connection to religion was maintained: charters were preserved in churches and abbeys or even transcribed into gospel books.¹⁴ Sods of the land granted were often placed upon the altar to make visible this religious connection and prove the validity of the grant to the laity.¹⁵ The authenticity was thus purely ecclesiastical and religious, and it is assumed that this is the reason why the Anglo-Saxon charter does not bear any outward signs of validation like its European counterparts.¹⁶

The symbolic ceremonies surrounding the transfer of land or the successful conclusions of land sales were usually conducted at meetings of the *witan*.¹⁷ This was the time when the foremost men of the country, lay and ecclesiastical, were present so that a sufficient number of witnesses was available. Once a gift or sale of land was agreed upon, there were several possible procedures for issuing a charter.¹⁸ It was not necessary for drafting and writing to be completed by the same scribe, nor were witnesses required throughout the whole process. Indeed, for the document to be legal it was sufficient for the witnesses to be present only at the ceremony of transfer.¹⁹

The introduction of the charter had implications for the development of land law, but more so for the perception of kingship as an office, separate from an actual person. With the written document, the king was able to make known his rulings while himself being absent, and through the act of writing these rulings were also anchored in eternity. By their very existence, charters were political instruments since they conveyed not only land but also power. Charters are carefully composed *works of public relation*, intended to proclaim lordship and are thus political symbols (*Herrschaftszeichen*) per se.²⁰ Consequently, charters correspond to changes in the political landscape; they become the playground on which authorities are established, maintained and abolished. Hence, the political information they carry covers a wide range of levels.

Occasionally, the king states in the dispositive section that he acts on the advice and decrees of his ancestors or contemporary great men, thus revealing a chain or circle of authority. It is, however, the titles that bear the greatest political significance. Dynastic problems, fluctuations of political power and historical circumstances are all reflected in the royal titles. The aspect of royal authority that they reveal is far more telling than in other documents due to the complexities and implications of the political information and the charter's function. By receiving a grant and accepting its symbolic expression, in the form of the charter, the beneficiary accepted the sovereignty and authority of the monarch.²¹ It also did not matter whether or not the recipient could read them;²² the symbolic validity of the diplomas worked regardless of its content, and the recipient's ability to understand it. Thus, no matter how garbled the Latin or how inaccurate the ownership as specified in the charter, the diploma retained its value.²³ The charter was inseparably tied to the land it conveyed. Materially, the charter objectified the grant, turning a rather abstract area into palpable land (this was enhanced even further when sods of the very land were placed upon the altar or its bounds were paced out). Politically, the charter objectified the authority of the king, likewise turning an abstract notion into something tangible.²⁴

Since the charters carry royal authority through kingdoms and even eras, an interest in the most accurate representation of the royal style is obvious. Recipients would be interested in investing their charters with the highest degree of authenticity, and thus authority, and hence the charter's formulae needed to be as accurate as possible. Essentially, the problem is one of trust: can the formula be trusted to be a faithful representation of royal power? Charters needed to be a valid means of recording grants and other exchanges first before they would turn into trusted instruments of political power.²⁵ As expressions of such power they became status symbols which in turn invested them with trust.²⁶ People involved in issuing a diploma, the grantor and the witnesses, also conferred trust onto the diploma: their presence at the (ceremonial) bestowal of the grant was set out in writing and with it their authority, which again added to the diploma's trustworthiness.

The one thing that invested anything with almost unquestionable trust was religion and everything pertaining to it. Religious instruction taught belief and hence trust in divine mercy and justice. Secular objects like the diplomas were rendered trustworthy by placing them close to the divine. Charters were concrete expressions of a monarch's (secular) politics, but they invariably remained principally ecclesiastical in origin and content, since writing was foremost a religious domain:

[b]oth donors and benefactors were interested in ensuring textual and transactional permanence; the most reliable traditional agency for this purpose was God. Documentary writing derived much of its power from a visible affinity with Holy Scripture, an affinity established both by graphic logic and by liturgical manipulation. Graphic logic involved such methods as the inscription of a Chrismon, a trinitarian invocation, the use of Latin, biblical preambles [proems], and divine maledictions and threats of excommunication against anyone who might challenge the gift being recorded. Liturgical manipulations included the charters' production by priestly scribes and their placement on altars or in Gospels. A manuscript charter was kindred to Scripture and, as such, was a space of sacred and secure inscription.²⁷

As we can see, the 'ecclesiastical gift of writing' is the essential link between the religious and secular spheres; and, even more so than the acceptance of Faith, writing was the means with which secular rulership acquired its religious dimension. Since the written word is not only closely linked to God but also understood to be directly derived from God, written documents achieve a sanctity of their own which is in turn transferred onto its issuer.²⁸ Writing not only linked these two spheres, but also attached the abstract notion of trust onto a piece of parchment to be read and re-read and used as an eternal insurance of trust. While kings accepted God as the ultimate authority, they were able to manipulate the religious sphere to their own needs. In complying with the ecclesiastical format of the charter, they also enhanced their own secular authority by placing it as close as possible to God. Accepting writing and ecclesiastical scribes was then rather a means to an end to combine both the ecclesiastical and the secular world within the charter. Royal authority as contained and conveyed in the charter likewise became sacred and secure and thus on a par with God. Here indeed did the medieval monarch place himself and his authority on the same level as Divinity, and here indeed did both the secular and ecclesiastical kingdoms achieve an equilibrium of powers.

On a territorial level, charters proclaim the king as ruler over a certain area which may not necessarily correspond to actual facts. Especially when the position of a ruler did not go unchallenged in a certain area, charters demonstrate the use of a more detailed and explicit territorial title as an expression of royal authority. This has implications on an internal and external political scale: within, the ruler claims, or even boasts, of his supremacy and thus enhances his own status; without, he demonstrates his overarching power by 'humbling' other rulers. Comparing the charters by a certain ruler as issued at a certain time enables the tracing of his territorial politics as well as his territorial ambitions.²⁹

With the death of Oshere, the last king of the Hwicce explicitly styled *rex*, all remaining extant charters from the local rulers place the kingdom in a subordinate position to its mighty neighbour Mercia. Hwiccian rulers are never again referred to as *rex* but as *regulus* or *subregulus*, and all their charters are issued with either direct (as stated in the dispositive

section, ‘cum consensu et licentia’) or indirect (that is, a subscription by the Mercian king) permission of the Mercian overlord.³⁰ When analysing the extant charters according to their *intitulatio*, an interesting tale of subordination is revealed. At first, Osric (fl. 676–682) and Oshere (fl. 680–693) retained the title *rex*, although the kingdom had been subjected to Mercia since the middle of the seventh century. This seems to have been an internal style only, however, for outside the Hwicce Osric was referred to as *minister* and *præfectus*.³¹ Similarly, his successor Oshere was styled *subregulus* in a charter by Bishop Mildred of Worcester and in a synodal decree, albeit in retrospect.³² Their successor Æthelweard (fl. 693–716×717, probably the son of Oshere) is styled only *subregulus*, and once merely *dux* (in a charter by King Æthelred of Mercia).³³ From then onwards, the rulers are always called *regulus*, although they are again referred to as *subregulus* in non-Hwiccean charters.³⁴ There is thus an obvious discrepancy between the self- and the outward perception concerning the status of the Hwiccean rulers as well as their realm. Internally, they were styled (or styled themselves) *regulus*, which hints at subordination, but does not denote too much independence that could offend the Mercian overlords. Outside, in charters by their Mercian overlords or even their Wessex neighbours, such sensitivities could not be taken into account so that here the title *subregulus* or even *dux* was employed. Only one charter offers a glimpse into the actual political realities: in S 62, Ealdred grants a lease for life to his kinswoman Æthelburh, but he requires the permission of the bishop of Worcester, Tilhere, to do so (‘cum licentia venerabilis episcopi Tilheri’).

A similar example of territorial ambitions, as indicated by the royal style in the charters, can be seen in the attempts to re-incorporate Danish lands into the Anglo-Saxon fold. After the death of Alfred the Great, his son Edward the Elder, and later his grandson Athelstan, strove to unite Anglo-Saxon England, and to re-incorporate the area of the Danelaw as delineated by the Alfred–Guthrum treaty in the late 880s. Before resorting to any military campaigns, however, Edward, together with Æthelred, lord of the Mercians, attempted to acquire lands in the Danelaw region through money. This is testified by two charters from Athelstan’s reign. In almost identical terms, both state that the lands concerned have been ‘a paganis emerat, iubente Eadweardo rege necnon et duce Æþeredo’, that is ‘bought [...] from the pagans by the order of King Edward and also of Ealdorman Æthelred’.³⁵ Unfortunately, there are no other charters of this kind that would shed light on similar territorial politics of the late Anglo-Saxon kings. Overall, there are relatively few tenth-century charters granting land in the Danish regions; their number increases only slightly after Edgar’s ascension to the throne.³⁶ The trend is then towards an all-encompassing royal title after re-conquests of the North and after the establishment of alliances with the surrounding Celtic neighbours.³⁷

In addition to these external political conditions, charters also shed light on internal political ones through their witness lists. These inform about the members of the council and especially about those who were close to the king and could thus exert a certain degree of influence.³⁸ Likewise, the ranking, and also the ‘byname’ of royal witnesses, sheds light on the royal grantors themselves. The royal princes, for example, are frequently listed among the lesser nobility rather than after their royal father.³⁹ A particularly interesting case is presented by the status of Æthelbald, son of Æthelwulf of Wessex. In consecutive charters, his princely style changes from *filius regis* to *dux* and then to *ealdorman*.⁴⁰ This might reflect a promotion in status and also responsibility, a sign of fatherly respect in the

abilities of his second-eldest son. However, this is a unique instance and royal sons are more usually referred to as either *filius regis* or, in case of the designated heir, as *ætheling*. Two charters by Edgar reveal another interesting facet of witness list politics. In them, his second wife Ælfthryth is styled *legitima prefati regis coniuncx*, enhancing the throne-worthiness of her own sons (Edmund and Æthelred) while simultaneously decreasing the status of the son by Edgar's first wife, Æthelflæd the White (Edward the Martyr).⁴¹ Edgar's second son, Edmund, witnesses before his older brother, and Edgar's first-born, Edward, and is styled *clito legitimus*, the legitimate prince, whereas Edward is only *clito procreatus*, the begotten prince.⁴² These styles would have serious implications for the contented throne succession after Edgar's death: only the children of a consecrated queen were deemed throneworthy, and Ælfthryth secured her sons' right early on.⁴³ Charters, then, reveal both internal court politics, through the ranking and status of their witnesses, but also current notions of succession and legitimacy.

The Functional Title in the Royal Styles

The distinct political concept which had the ruler as *vicarius Christi* at its centre is often referred to as theocratic kingship. A variety of letters from bishops, popes and other clerics show the efforts of the clergy to communicate this Christian concept of rulership and so to Christianise the royal understanding of power. This is best illustrated by the 'appropriation' of the divine grace: kings began to perceive their office as God-given and as a divine favour that had to be merited. The charters demonstrate this changed perception, specifically in the later Anglo-Saxon period. As distinct ecclesiastical document, they were adapted and manipulated to convey a very specific secular notion of kingship; secular, but nevertheless placed even closer to the divine than before. Kings were seen, and began to see themselves, as divine instruments for the benefit of their society or for its punishment. Yet what is in a king? According to Timothy Reuter, '[t]o be a king is not simply a matter of status or action, but also of style. [...] If you were perceived as a king, then you were one'.⁴⁴ A king is someone who is not only elevated above others, but is also perceived by others to be so elevated. Kingship has to be acknowledged, hence it has to be established, affirmed, maintained, asserted – it has to be 'made'. The following analyses just how charters 'made' kings – how the diploma was an important tool in conveying a particular ruler image and in establishing the essential link with the divine.

The term *title* requires some explanation and definition before turning to its political aspects. Formally, a royal title consists of several elements: the name of the king, his functional title (or occupational title), an ethnic or territorial title and the legitimisation formula (a reference to God's grace); in combination, these elements are known as the *intitulatio* (or royal style) of a king.⁴⁵ A typical style might be as follows: 'ego Æðeluulf gratia Dei rex occidentalium Saxonum necnon et Cantuariorum' (S 297). The ethnic or territorial title expresses the historical realities of the king's dominion, but there can be considerable variation in terms of the functional title and the legitimisation formula.

For most Anglo-Saxon charters, it was the beneficiary of the land grant who was responsible for issuing the document.⁴⁶ A degree of royal control over charter production remained, as well as an inherent interest of stating a political reality in the charter that is as close as possible to the historical reality. There have been vigorous scholarly debates

around the issue of whether or not chanceries existed in the Anglo-Saxon period. On the one hand, kings might have had a vested interest in the charter production process and might have supervised or even controlled the application of certain formulae. On the other hand, the lack of any reference to chanceries, and the practice of authentication charters via witness lists, implies that kings were not interested in, and had no influence over, the charter production and the royal styles in particular, in regard to neither their composition nor their legal relevance.⁴⁷ Within those debates, the possibility of a ‘flexible’ chancery has been disregarded: a single royal scribe, or even a group of scribes, could have formed a ‘temporary chancery’ at required occasions and dissolved at the end of *witan* meetings to return to their former occupation. Nor is their ecclesiastical background a hindrance or in conflict to their writing in a secular surrounding under royal command. The lack of a formulary does support the assumption that no royal secretariat existed at this time.⁴⁸ However, a comparison of the elements of the extant charters (for example, the proem, the royal styles, anathema) reveals a certain repertoire of stock phrases. While this does not prove the existence of a now-lost formulary, it does show that older charters were used as models and that scribes had experience in charter composition.⁴⁹ It is possible, for example, to chart preferences for certain formulae, the introduction or abandonment of old ones and their expansion over the course of time. This, then, suggests that charters were produced in a controlled environment and that there were royally employed scribes who exerted considerable influence over the production of charters.⁵⁰ The following analysis, then, investigates the functional title with regard to their charter contexts which in turn are set against the wider frame of their socio-historical contexts.

Rex

The first time the word *rex* is used as a denominator of a functional title is on Egyptian papyri and coins from Antioch from about AD 271.⁵¹ The oldest Germanic extant evidence derives from an edict issued in 483 by the Vandal king Hunric (477–484) as *Rex Hunirix Vandalorum et Alanorum*.⁵² Etymologically, *rex* is related to *regere*, ‘to keep straight, guide, lead, rule’, a notion that is expressed in the various definitions of rulership by writers such as Isidore of Seville and Ps.-Cyprian.⁵³ Gradually, *rex* replaces the more common *imperator* of the Roman Empire and as early as the fourth century onwards, *rex* became the official and typical denomination for rulership.⁵⁴ Of over twenty expressions of rulership in the charters, *rex* is the most common for Anglo-Saxon kings.⁵⁵ Most commonly, the title follows the name of the king but, especially in charters of the later Anglo-Saxon period, it is placed either at the very end of the *intitulatio*, or in the middle, following the legitimization formula. Likewise, the common title of *rex* was occasionally, and more frequently from the tenth century onwards, combined with another one like *rector*, *gubernator*, etc. to create a dual title. In very rare cases, the *intitulatio* only consists of the name of the king with no other royal designation. The few extant Old English charters always contain its vernacular counterpart *cyning* and an addition on only three occasions: *brytenwalda* (S 427), *casere* (S 566) and *wealdend* (S 914).

Rector

It is no coincidence that *rex* is often combined with *rector* (‘ego N. rex et rector’). Both are drawn from the same word family and confer similar ideas of rulership.⁵⁶ The term translates the Old English *wealda*,⁵⁷ but another connotation figured more strongly in the

usage of this title, that of teacher and educator in the widest sense. To repeat one sentence of Isidore's definition of king: 'But he does not govern who does not correct (*corrigere*); therefore, the name of king is held by one behaving rightly (*recte*)'.⁵⁸ And Ps.-Cyprian states that:

Etenim regem non iniquum sed correctorem iniquorum esse oportet. Nomen enim regis intellectualiter hoc retinet, ut subiectis omnibus rectoris officium procuret.⁵⁹

For these two early thinkers, rulers had a moral obligation towards their subjects: it was their duty not only to rule them justly, but also to correct and teach them. Another strong proponent of this idea was Alcuin, who, in various letters to Anglo-Saxon kings and Charlemagne, emphasised this moral obligation (*rector morum*).⁶⁰ For him, the duty of *corrector* transformed the simple *rex* into a *rex philosophus*.⁶¹ Such a king would, according to Alcuin, also most readily embrace the duty of defender of the Church.⁶²

The first extant charter to contain *rector* is a grant by Coenwulf, king of Mercia, to Oswulf, his *dux* and *minister* (S 153, possibly original, AD 798);⁶³ unfortunately, however, the title is incomplete due to damage: 'Ego [. . .]ente rector et imperator Merciorum regni'.⁶⁴ Only a year before, Alcuin had sent a letter to Coenwulf, in which he points to the divine approbation of his kingship and emphasises his moral duty:

[S]icut regiam dignitatem decet omnino, ut, quanto sublimior est honore ceteris, tanto nobilior sit omni morum perfectione, iustitiae decore, pietatis sanctitate. [. . .] Illum semper habeas in mente, qui te egenum exaltavit et posuit super principes populi sui rectorem. Te magis agnosce pastorem et dispensatorem donorum Dei quam dominum vel exactorem. Semper in mente habeas optimos nobilissimi antecessoris tui mores, modestiam in conversatione, et studium in corrigendo vitam populi christiani. [. . .] Sacerdotes Christi semper, clarissime rector, honorifice habeas; quia, quanto plus Christi servos et verbi Dei praedicatores venerabiliter observas, tanto magis Christus, rex verus et pius, tuum honorem exaltat et confirmat, sanctis suis intercedentibus.⁶⁵

Alcuin asks him always to be mindful of God who has raised him to be 'super principes sui rectorem' and requests that he should continue the works of his predecessor, Offa. Alcuin's final salutation to Coenwulf is 'clarissime rector'. In important passages, Alcuin enforces the picture of the morally good king who educates his people so that they will also enjoy God's blessings. More importantly, Alcuin establishes a connection between the new king and Offa – the implication being that if Coenwulf follows Offa's lead, he will equally enjoy his predecessor's fortune and reputation. The title may have found its way into the charter via Alcuin's letter, thereby forming a link to Offa and promulgating Coenwulf's (new) duty of educator and corrector of his people.

The next set of charters to contain this title are by Alfred of Wessex,⁶⁶ although neither of these is authentic in their received form and they are probably later fabrications – their territorial titles are reminiscent of those of Athelstan, Edmund and Eadred. However, whoever fabricated these texts thought it fitting to call Alfred *rector*, perhaps even with regard to Asser who dedicated his work to 'Domino meo [. . .] rectori Ælfred Anglorum Saxonum Regi'.⁶⁷ Considering Alfred's zeal in the field of education, there is probably no other Anglo-Saxon king more deserving of this title. In him, Alcuin's *rex philosophus* finds its best expression and application: Alfred educates himself and his ministers to be

able to rule his people correctly.⁶⁸ This mindset is best known from his preface to the Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Cura Pastoralis*.

It took another fifty years before the title was firmly established as royal denomination. Only four of Athelstan's charters employ it, and none of these is authentic in its received form.⁶⁹ From Edmund onwards, its use became more frequent (33 out of his 64 charters contain this title, often in combination with another one). This suggests that the concept of the king as educator developed into an indispensable dimension of rulership; in fact, it became one of its essential duties. The idea of a wise king in the early Middle Ages had become a reality, if only in the charters.

Gubernator

The idea of government as directing or even steering a realm found its clearest expression in the title *gubernator*, which literally translates as steersman. It occurs for the first time in a spurious charter by Coenred of Mercia and Offa of East Anglia (S 80; AD 709). Both kings renounced their thrones, left their families and went to Rome together to receive the tonsure and end their lives as monks (HE, V. 19). Bede declares that both were noble kings and much loved, but this departure could suggest political troubles in their kingdoms. Offa is described as being so loved that the people longed for him to have and hold the kingdom, which implies that he was a steward to Mercian overlordship rather than an independent king in his own right. This title is not found again until in two of Alfred's charters,⁷⁰ and, from Athelstan onwards, is used more regularly with the meaning of ruler. Within the *intitulatio*, it always occurs in combination with another title, usually *rex*, and often combined to *gubernator et rector*. It appears only twice as the royal title on the subscription list.⁷¹ Considering the frequency of its use, *gubernator* was a favourite denomination in charters of Eadred (33x), Eadwig (28x) and Edgar (24x), so its main time of usage can be dated from the mid-940s up to the early 960s and petering out during Æthelred's reign.

The functional title *gubernator* is more important on another level: since late antiquity, it expresses an administration assigned by divine command, gaining wide currency under Emperor Justinian.⁷² Until the tenth century, its use had been restricted to continental sources, although there are occasional references in Boniface, Alcuin and Aldhelm.⁷³ In his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede only occasionally employs the verb (*gubernare* and other conjugated forms) and the noun (*gubernatio*), both inconsistently, and mostly to refer to either divine or ecclesiastical government.⁷⁴ Only once, in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke, does Bede use the word *gubernator*.⁷⁵ Similarly, Asser employs it only once in a reference to Alfred's governing skills.⁷⁶

In the charter context, this functional title retained its reference to the divine appointment of rulership. Of approximately 120 occurrences, the title was only combined 15 times with a legitimization formula. The derivatives of the title were used throughout the charter corpus, often in the proem.⁷⁷ While neither title nor related words were restricted to a purely religious meaning, they seem nevertheless to have been employed mainly with that connotation in mind.

Imperator

No other Anglo-Saxon royal title was more at the centre of a heated (and still unresolved) debate than that of *imperator*. Originally, the word denoted a Roman military commander

who, following victory in battle, was acclaimed *imperator* by his soldiers (*Heerkaisertum*).⁷⁸ From there, it was but a small step to link the military title with a political ruler mandate (*Herrscherauftrag*), meaning that the term was eventually applied to the Roman monarchs as an expression of their sovereign rule. While these connotations became irrelevant at the time of the revival of the title in 800 with Charlemagne's imperial coronation, it remained the most distinguished imperial functional title.⁷⁹ The reasons behind this revival are manifold and originate in the struggle between the Roman Western and Byzantine Eastern empires, as well as in the ecclesiastical creation of the monarch as *defensor ecclesiae*.⁸⁰

The early medieval usage of the *imperator* title preconditioned a certain hegemonial claim by the ruler, that is, suzerainty over a multitude of smaller *regna*. The understanding of hegemony was not static so that the title was used even when the territory in itself was comparatively small.⁸¹ With reference to Anglo-Saxon England, it occurs first in Adamnan's *Life of St Columba*, where he relates that Oswald of Northumbria had been ordained emperor of the whole of Britain by God after having been victorious in battle: 'Ossualdus rex [. . .] totius Britanniae imperator a Deo ordinatus est.'⁸² Bede uses the words *imperator* and *imperium* throughout his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, albeit inconsistently.⁸³ In 798, it occurs for the first time in a charter by Coenwulf of Mercia (S 153/possibly original): 'Ego [. . .] jente rector et imperator Merciorum regni'.⁸⁴ As the Mercian supremacy had been waning since the death of Offa, it did not reflect any actual hegemonial claim by Coenwulf.⁸⁵ Instead, this title was an attempt to link Offa's power and the Mercian supremacy he had created to the current incumbent as an instrument for strengthening Coenwulf's rule in Mercia and legitimising it in Kent (also compensating for the fact that he was only a distant relative of Offa).

It is worthwhile considering the need to legitimise Coenwulf's rule in Kent in greater detail. The land granted away with this charter lies at *Hremping wic*, also known as *Hafingseota*, south of the river Limen, Kent. Only two years before, Coenwulf had ravaged the people of Kent and seized their king Præn (ASC C, F 796). Coenwulf re-established his authority in the long-contested province and again imposed Mercian hegemony over Kent, a process which is most clearly expressed in the title of *imperator*. The importance of charter S 153 is also obvious in regard to its witness list, which is unusually long, containing twenty-seven names. Any external influences can be excluded: none of the letters addressed to Coenwulf nor his other charters bear this title and Charlemagne had not yet been crowned emperor.⁸⁶ Its usage must have originated in a genuine desire to express Mercian hegemony again, even more so since its recipient was an East Kentish *dux et princeps*. Later in the same year, however, Coenwulf established his brother Cuthred (798–807) as ruler in Kent, and the *imperator* title was never used again. It would be interesting to know the extent to which the elevation of Cuthred and the issuing of S 153 coincided temporally: issuing S 153 after Cuthred was placed on the throne would be a reminder to not only him, but also the Kentish people of who is overlord of all. Conversely, the charter could have been used to pave the way for Cuthred's accession – but this must remain speculation.

The *imperator* title resurfaces again in Athelstan's charters S 392 (AD 939 or 940/spurious; authentic elements) and S 406 (AD 930/spurious).⁸⁷ From then onwards, the title was used infrequently in charters issued by Eadred (seven times), Eadwig (once), Edgar (twice) and Æthelred (six times, of these twice as subscriber).⁸⁸ There is one Old

English charter by Eadred that employs the vernacular version *casere*.⁸⁹ In another charter issued the same year (S 569; AD 955), the Latin title is used again. Since they both belong to the so-called ‘alliterative charter’ group, the usage of the same style seems natural. Its occurrence can be connected to specific historical circumstances such as the subordination of Northumbria (ASC C 946, 948, 954), ravages in rebellious areas (ASC D 952, 986, 988) and, with regard to Æthelred, the Viking threat (ASC C from 994 on). The *imperator* denomination cannot be explicitly linked to the ancient soldier acclamation, but it points to the martial imposition of sovereign rule, thus hegemony. This is especially apparent with Eadwig, who uses the title only once (in 956), in the context of the separation of the kingdom and the subsequent dissolution of any hegemonial claim. Æthelred’s charters use the title during times of increased Viking threat in an attempt to demonstrate imperial sovereignty in the face of actual powerlessness.

In conclusion, this title did not become one of the standard *intitulationes* for Anglo-Saxon kings. It occurs only once, in a spurious charter of Cnut (S 952; AD 1018), and, if the title alone carries some authenticity, might refer to his combined rule over Anglo-Saxon England and Denmark. In general, the term was too fraught with the idea of the past Roman Empire, and it retained this connection after the re-establishment of the new Holy Roman Empire in 800. Furthermore, it was a title conferred by papal authority onto the Carolingian and Ottonian kings which, in itself, expresses a higher claim to authority than that of the Anglo-Saxon kings.⁹⁰

Primicerius

The royal title *primic(h)erius* derives from Latin *primus in cera* (that is, *in tabula cerata*), the first listed on a wax tablet, hence the first in any class of officials or the head of any administrative body respectively. In ecclesiastical usage, this term was also commonly applied to the directors of schools for the training of young clerics, a position which might also include certain liturgical functions.⁹¹ This title can be found in charters from King Alfred of Wessex onwards, although it is more appropriate to place its origin in the reign of Edmund since these earlier charters are all spurious.⁹² In the charters of Edmund, Eadred, Eadwig, Edward the Martyr and Æthelred, the title is used only sparingly, but it can be found frequently in Edgar’s charters, mostly from the 960s and usually in combination with *rex*, once with *basileus* (S 728) and once on its own (S 748).⁹³ According to Simon Keynes, the functional title *primicerius* was a typical element of the charter group known as *Dunstan B* charters.⁹⁴

This group of charters spreads over the reigns of several kings, but the ecclesiastical connotation and implication of this term may have been too pronounced to find appreciation with most scribes for the *intitulatio* of secular kings. The only one to live up to the title was Edgar, a suitable epithet for the strongest proponent of the Benedictine Reform and greatest friend of the Church.⁹⁵ It also resonates with ideas of education in a religious sense which Edgar was promoting fervently. In the Old English account on the establishment of monasteries, Edgar is highly praised as having:

Halige stowa he geclænsode fram ealra manna fulnessum, no þæt an on Wesseaxna rice, ac eac swylce on Myrcena lande. Witodlice he adref canonicas þe on þæm foresædum gyltum oferfledde genihtsumedon, & on þam fyrmestum stowum ealles his anwealdes munecas gestaþolode to weorþfulre þenunge Hælendes Cristes. [. . .] He began mid geornfulre scrudnunge smeagan &

ahsian be þam gebodum þæs halgan regules, & witan wolde þæs sylfan regules lare, þurh þa biþ
gegearwod rihtes lifes gewuna & arwyrþe gewilnung, & þa gesetednessa þe to halgum mægenum
wæmaþ.⁹⁶

By expelling the worldly clerics, instituting a new order and imposing a new religious rule, Edgar acted as *rex et primicerius* in every sense of the words. The duty of a king to educate and correct has already been discussed. Edgar has extended this duty into the religious realm, more so than any of either his predecessors or even his successors, surpassing the connotation of *rector* and becoming *primicerius*.⁹⁷ It is also obvious here that the policies of church and state were linked to such an extent that it required royal *potestas* to achieve an improvement since the ecclesiastical *auctoritas* had become too weak. The application of this formula is not merely an innovation, like many other titles of the tenth century, but an actual counterpart to current social, historical and political circumstances.

Basileus

The term *basileus* was commonly applied to barbarian kings by the Greeks, but it was also used (unofficially) to refer to Byzantine kings.⁹⁸ Emperor Herakleios introduced it into the Byzantine administration in the early seventh century, from which time the equalisation of the terms *imperator* and *basileus* originated and it was no longer used to refer to barbarian rulers.⁹⁹ Since the Byzantine emperors were always anointed, *basileus*, as the title of an anointed one, refers to the divine legitimization of the imperial rule, *basileus gratia Dei*, even if not combined with a legitimization formula.

Originally, *basileus* was reserved solely for Byzantine emperors, especially in their attempt to delineate themselves from the Frankish and, later, German emperors of the (West) Romans. In Anglo-Saxon charters, however, it was used to denote kings with no imperial claim, and it usually occurs in combination with other functional titles. It first emerges in a charter from 670, which Cenwealh of Wessex subscribes as 'Coenuualla basilleos Westsaxonum', and in one of Alfred's diplomas.¹⁰⁰ Since both these documents are of dubious authenticity, it is more appropriate to assume an introduction of this title during Athelstan's reign. At first, however, it was used only infrequently, around ten times in the charters from Athelstan to Eadwig. The title was most often used in Edgar's charters (on sixty-one occasions, eight times as subscriptive title), which is probably connected to the influence of Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester. According to Harald Kleinschmidt, it was Æthelwold who either invented the 'basileus totius Albions/basileus totius Britanniae/basileus Anglorum' formulae or in whose surrounding the titles were developed.¹⁰¹ The functional title *primicerius* has already been discussed as having explicit ecclesiastical connotations, and *gubernator* also implies rulership by divine appointment. In this connection, *basileus* is an obvious alternative and addition to Edgar's *intitulationes*. Edgar was the most willing and most suitable candidate for an ecclesiastical transformation of the traditional warrior king into the peaceable *rex ecclesiasticus*.

Grecisms

In a diploma of Athelstan, issued during the last years of his reign, the scribe has inserted an unusual grecism: 'Apelstanus nodante Dei gracia basileos Anglorum et eque tocius Britannie orbis Deicolarumque fylos atque curanculus eorum';¹⁰² Athelstan is called

friend and carer of all people under his sway. Grecisms are not all that uncommon in Anglo-Saxon charters, other examples being *anax*, *archon* and, of course, *basileus*, but *fylos* (= 'friend') appears only once.¹⁰³ The appellation does not connote rulership, but its connection to *curanculus* (for *curagulus* = 'guardian') is rather interesting.¹⁰⁴ Both denote caring on a more personal level than expected of a king which is revealed in the context of the charter. King Athelstan grants twelve hides at Tarrant Hinton, Dorset, to the nuns of Shaftesbury. This nunnery had been established by King Alfred for his daughter Æthelgifu, probably in 893.¹⁰⁵ Although Athelstan's aunt was probably already dead by the time of the grant (the recipients are only referred to in general terms as 'Christicolis uirginibus'), its significance as a family nunnery is indicated by Athelstan's personalised style. There is only one other grant by Athelstan to the *familia* at Shaftesbury (S 419, AD 932/a), albeit without any personalised styling. Both charters require the religious duty of interceding with prayers on behalf of the donor in return for the grant. In S 419, this requirement is much more specific and heavier than in S 429.¹⁰⁶ The later charter emphasises Athelstan's relationship to Christians in general ('basileus . . . Deicolarumque fylos atque curanculus eorum') and to the Shaftesbury nuns in particular. Like *fylos*, *Deicola* only appears in this charter. The simplest suggestion might be that Athelstan wanted to express his gratitude for the constant intercessions on his behalf which brought him two peaceful years so far.

Another grecism that appears only once in a royal style is *anax* (king, ruler). In S 712a (AD 963/a), Edgar is styled 'anax afflatus amore', 'king inspired by love'. The title appears only three times outside the charters, all in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*, where it is also applied to Edgar.¹⁰⁷ Since the *Chronicon* was composed after the charter, Æthelweard might have borrowed the title from there, although it is equally possible that he merely chose the word to complement *arce* phonetically. In the charter, the word seems to have been used, apart from the obvious alliteration, to complete the line hexametrically.¹⁰⁸

The last Greek title used in royal styles is *archons*, 'ruler'. It appears only five times, including once within the subscriptive title, and always on its own.¹⁰⁹ Apart from the so-styled kings, the word occurs in charter texts when referring to subordinate nobles¹¹⁰ and as a functional title for higher ecclesiastics.¹¹¹ Outside the charter corpus, I know of only two instances that this title was used, once in a poem by Aldhelm and in the *Vita Sancti Dunstani*.¹¹² In general, this title is rarely applied to kings, but most commonly referred to high-ranking churchmen and officials below the rank of king. As such, it is glossed with *princeps* in an eighth-century Latin glossary and its accompanying territorial noun, *archia*, as *principatus*.¹¹³ It seems curious that the scribes would choose a title for their kings that apparently diminishes them in status. In Eadwig's case, one could argue that this is a veiled reference to the divided kingdom, implying that Eadwig did not possess full dominion and was hence less of a king.

Single Occurrences

In continental sources, kings of the emerging Germanic realms were regularly referred to as *principes*.¹¹⁴ (Roman writers applied this title indiscriminately to rulers of foreign political structures.¹¹⁵) The Merovingians were the first to be accorded that title, usually as *rex et princeps*.¹¹⁶ With their demotion (from 687), the term was applied to the Carolingian *maiores domus* who were then styled 'ego N. dux et princeps Francorum', as, for example, in the *Capitularies*, until they rose to kingship in 751.¹¹⁷ In these sources, the

connection of *princeps* with *dux* denotes a function, the rule of the 'First' of a people and thus declaring a claim to power.¹¹⁸ The combination of *rex* and *princeps* elevates this claim again and hence its legitimacy. The only time the title *princeps* occurs in an Anglo-Saxon charter is in a diploma by Eadberht II of Kent (762–c.764).¹¹⁹ He was probably the son of Æthelberht II (725–62) and his reign was limited to East Kent only while Sigered, probably an East Saxon, simultaneously ruled over West Kent.¹²⁰ The term *princeps* is admittedly rather ambiguous. Aldhelm, for example, refers to the Roman emperor as *princeps*, as does Bede.¹²¹ Alcuin uses the term to refer to Charlemagne in one of his poems.¹²² Bede, in particular, seems to have felt the limits of the Latin term when trying to find the right title for his rulers. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, *princeps* can include *reges*, but also men ranked below kings but having independent authority.¹²³ Similarly, in a letter to Æthelbald of Mercia by Boniface, the Apostle Peter is referred to as *princeps*, prince but not king.¹²⁴ In the *Life of St Wilfrid*, a Northumbrian called Berhtfrith is referred to as being 'secundus a rege princeps'.¹²⁵ In S 28, however, Eadberht's title is preceded by *rex*, thus rendering a relationship of dependence rather unlikely. The political instability in Kent at the time of the charter's compilation might have provoked the scribe to include an additional title to enhance the status of the East Kentish king, especially in opposition to the West Kentish one who, as an East Saxon foreigner, is only styled 'rex dimidie partis prouincie Cantuariorum'.¹²⁶ The same Kentish scribe might have been responsible for drawing up these two charters and an additional one for Offa, who has been given a rather unusual style: 'Offa rex Merciorum regali prosapia Merciorum oriundus atque omnipotentis dei dispensatione eiusdem constitutus in regem'.¹²⁷ Here, the scribe particularly emphasises Offa's ancestry from the Mercian royal line, in another attempt to underline external (illegitimate?) claims against Eadberht's rightful rule, thus even further distinguishing the latter's claim.

Of all the royal styles in the charters, only one bears the explicit connotation of superintendent or overseer: *previsor*, in S 395 (AD 924/authentic) of King Athelstan. The *intitulatio* is as follows: 'Æthelstan diuina indulgente clemencia rex Anglorum tociusque climatis ferme cataclismatum gurgitibus Cristiane patrigene preuisor', that is 'Athelstan, indulged with divine mercy, king of the English and overseer of the Christian citizenry of just about all regions surrounded by water'. There is no other source that uses *previsor* in this sense when referring to a king. The only other time it is used in this way, albeit in the sense of war leader, is in Æthelweard's *Chronicon*: under the annal for 871 he describes how King Æthelred of Wessex fought against the Vikings 'iam præuisores aspera tenent loca', but he uses the term to describe the enemy leaders (who may have been kings themselves).¹²⁸ In all other instances, the title is applied to ecclesiastics, as, for example, in S 430 or in the *Vita Sancti Dunstani*.¹²⁹ In general, *previsor* refers to an administrator of ecclesiastical institutions, which would explain the reference to the Christian citizens in charter S 395. If Athelstan, or rather the draftsman of the charter, envisaged the people as one body with the king as head, this functional title would indeed be appropriate.

The functional title *praelatus*, as contained in S 840 (AD 982/authentic),¹³⁰ denotes the usual chief position of the title bearer, but, more interestingly, it also denotes preference. This is significant in relation to its context within the phrase: 'haereditaria sorte praelatus', 'hereditary prelate by election'. The title points to Æthelred's twofold succession to the throne: by inheritance, since he belonged to the royal dynasty, and by election through the *witan*.¹³¹ It might also hint to the fact that Æthelred was the preferred candidate for

some nobles in the disputed election after Edgar's death. Similar references can be found in close temporal proximity in S 838 (AD 981/authentic) and S 843 (AD 982/possibly authentic), among many others, implying the necessity to indicate Æthelred's legitimacy in these early charters. Outside the royal diplomatic corpus, *praelatus* was usually applied to ecclesiastical administrators.¹³²

The last functional title to appear only once in a charter is *predux* in S 725 (AD 964/possibly authentic) by Edgar.¹³³ There are several possible interpretations of this title: first, as ruler, thus complementing *rex*; second, in regard to its separate parts *pre-* (denoting a position at the front or ahead of something) and *dux*, as the first among the nobles or leaders; and third, in regard to its relation to *duco*, *ducere*, *dux*, *ductus*, as guide. The connotation of guidance, in turn, refers to the king's moral obligation towards his subject. In fact, it is the latter meaning which is more commonly applied to bearers of this title, whether secular or religious. The reason for using *predux* here might lie in the historical context: 964 (ASC A) was the year in which Edgar expelled the canons from several minsters and churches and replaced them with monks. His restoration of the moral order would justify the application of this title.

Other Variants

There are four charters that contain the functional title *apice* (dative of *apex*, top, hence head, and crowning dignity). The first two were issued by Athelstan, and are of questionable provenance, and the other two were issued by Edgar and are of established authenticity.¹³⁴ It is, however, possible to exclude an interpolation in Athelstan's styles with those from Edgar's charters. The formula *per omnipatrantis dexteram* and its variants originated in Athelstan's reign and was hence only imitated by later scribes.¹³⁵ The *intitulatio* is as follows: 'ego N. per omnipatrantis dexteram apice totius Albionis sullimatus'; S 421 adds 'circumquaque basilicas' at the end and S 423 *rex Anglorum* after the king's name. The latter charter is also the only one in which the title *apice* is combined with another one, *rex*. These charters seem to be the only instances where *apex* is employed as a functional title. Aldhelm and Bede both use the term when referring to rulership in general, although Bede employs it solely when speaking of imperial rulers.¹³⁶ It is thus possible that the scribes of these charters found this title appropriate since both Athelstan and Edgar were similarly sovereign rulers.

There is only one functional title that explicitly refers to the warlike aspect of kingship, that of *propugnator*. The word denotes front-rank fighters, even elite soldiers, and, more generally, defenders and champions. It occurs only eight times, once in a spurious charter of Athelstan, five times in Eadred's charters and once in charters issued by Eadwig and Æthelred, respectively.¹³⁷ The basic *intitulatio* is as follows: 'ego N. rex Ængulsæxna ond Norðhymbra imperator paganorum gubernator Brittonumque propugnator'. In early continental sources, the term was applied in its general sense, but in letters from the ninth century onwards, *propugnator* is increasingly used to denote the defender of the Church.¹³⁸ Interestingly, Anglo-Saxon scribes instead used it to refer to the defenders of the British. Bede uses the word in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in Book I ch. 12, where he speaks of 'ignauī propugnatores', the wretched (British) defenders who were fighting desperately against the Picts after the Romans had left. The historical event that might have spurred the resurrection of this title and meaning from Bede's time may be found in annal 948 (ASC E): '& feng Ædred his broðor to rice. [. . .] & Scottas him aðas sworon þæt hi eall

wolden þæt he wolde'.¹³⁹ Considering this title and its use on the Continent, especially in letters from popes and higher ecclesiastics to secular kings and nobles, it is rather noteworthy that in Anglo-Saxon England it never acquired the meaning of defender of the Church, indeed that no such title was applied to kings at all in the charters.¹⁴⁰

The last title to be used only rarely in the dispositive section is that of *curagulus*, from Lat. *curam agere*, care-taker or guardian. Similar to *fylos*, this functional title evokes a more personal dimension of rulership. It occurs only eight times, mostly in charters of Athelstan and once each in charters by Edmund and Æthelred; furthermore, except for S 904, it always occurs in combination with a legitimation formula.¹⁴¹ This title seems to have been unique to Anglo-Saxon England since there appear to be no extant external sources that employ it. Its only other occurrence is in a letter to Archbishop Dunstan.¹⁴² Typically, the formula runs as follows: 'ego N. nodante [for "donante"] Dei gratia basileus Anglorum et equæ totius Bryttanniæ orbis curagulus' (there is a certain variation within the legitimation formula). It is tempting to assume a connection between the legitimation formula and the title, as if the duty of care-taking is one specific aspect, even condition, of the bestowal of divine grace. Historically, it can be placed within the context of the unification of Anglo-Saxon England, which would justify the claim to be carer of the 'whole orb of Britain'.

In roughly half of its occurrences, the title *monarchus* can be found in the subscription and is thus the most popular one apart from *rex*. It first occurs in a spurious charter of Æthelbald of Mercia (S 93; AD 726 x 737), but the royal style derives from a charter group following the *Orthodoxorum* model of the second half of the tenth century with the functional title itself preceding it.¹⁴³ This late origin is unsurprising given that it denotes a sole ruler, a status that could only be legitimately claimed from Athelstan onwards. Typically, the style looks as follows: 'ego N. (territory) monarc(h)us'. This title can also be found outside the charter corpus, so for example in a *Glossary* (as *anwalda*),¹⁴⁴ and Bede uses it to refer to abbots or bishops in his prose *Life of St Cuthbert*.¹⁴⁵ Additionally, this title was used to refer to God or Christ, as in Aldhelm's *Carmina Ecclesiastica* and prose *De Virginitate*.¹⁴⁶ In S 531 (AD 948/authentic), God is called 'Omnipotens factor atque monarchus dispensator'. Like many other functional titles, *monarchus* implies a closeness to the divine and rulership through God's mercy.

The remaining three styles only occur in the subscription: *primus* and *induperator* twice, and *dominus* only once.¹⁴⁷ Of these, only *dominus* occurs in an authentic diploma; the others are at best treated with caution. In particular, S 897 lacks a proper royal style in both the dispositive ('Æþelredus non icognitum') and subscriptive sections. *Dominus* was a fairly common appellation, applied in general to any kind of master or governor, in both the secular and religious spheres. *Primus* is not an actual title, but denotes precedence over others. Thus, it might be placed in connection with *princeps*, a title that similarly refers to the first among many, and likewise is applied without any territorial or gentile denomination. As form of *imperator*, *induperator* occurs only rarely, as, for example, in a poem by Alcuin.¹⁴⁸

Taken together, the functional titles in the royal *intitulationes* of the charters as analysed here demonstrate a development of kingship that is situated increasingly closer to the divine sphere. Most of the titles derive from the religious realm and are rarely found outside the charters. While acknowledging a certain amount of scribal fancy and the copying of older or other models, the titles are often carefully chosen to suit a certain

ruler image that was meant to be transmitted in the charters. Furthermore, the variety of functional titles employed denotes different dimensions of kingship. The concept of king developed from simple ruler to guardian, protector and educator, and, as has been shown, towards becoming head of both the secular and ecclesiastical spheres. In this regard, the power and authority of Anglo-Saxon kings was unique among the early medieval kings, and while this is due to the historical developments, it is also evidence of Anglo-Saxon kingship superseding the theocratic model by placing the king as co-ruler to Christ.

Old English Variants

There are only a few surviving Old English charters, and most of them are translations of Latin originals.¹⁴⁹ The most common appellation for a ruler in Old English is *cyning*, which occurs around 8,000 times, according to *Dictionary of Old English* estimates.¹⁵⁰ This term will thus only be briefly discussed in regard to Ælfric's rendering of Isidore of Seville's definition of kingship:

*rex cyning is gecweden a regendo, þæt is fram recendome, forðan ðe se cyning sceal mid micelum wisdom his leode wissian and bewerian mid cræfte. [. . .] Ic cweþe nu rex cyning, þæt is se ðe gemetfæstlice his folc gewissað. Gif he þonne mid his riccetera hi ofsit, þonne bið he tyrannus, þæt is reðe oððe wælhreow.*¹⁵¹

Like Isidore, Ælfric tries to establish a connection between the term *cyning* and a concept of good rulership. A king ought to guide his people with great wisdom, and protect them with might (or courage). He should also guide them gently; if he oppresses them, however, he proves a fierce and cruel tyrant. However, whereas Isidore's focus is on the justness and correctness of rulership, Ælfric shifts this to wisdom and gentle rule as the main feature of kingship. The warrior king of Isidore's time who, with the sword, accomplished what the priest could not with words, has now transformed into a reformed monarch who rules with wisdom rather than with blood.

Casere as a translation of *imperator* in the Old English charters appears only once, in S 566: 'He hafað geweorðad mid cynedome Angulseaxna Eadred cyning, casere totius Britannie Deo gratias'.¹⁵² This charter was issued in 955 (probably an Old English version of an authentic Latin diploma¹⁵³), when Eadred had already been on the throne for nine years, but he died later the same year. The *Chronicle* relates that, immediately upon his succession in 946, after the death of his brother Edmund, Eadred reduced all Northumbria under his rule and the Scots swore oaths of allegiance to him (ASC C 946, E 948). Northumbria remained a troublesome province, but Eadred established himself as king there. His title *cyning and casere totius Britanniae* in the charter could quite possibly be a shorter version of the more common 'rex Ængulsæxna and Northymbra imperator, paganorum gubernator, Brittonumque propugnator' (S 549).¹⁵⁴ In the Old English corpus, *casere* is most commonly applied to the Roman emperors in general (for example, in one of Ælfric's Lent homilies¹⁵⁵) or to specific Roman emperors (for example, in the Old English version of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*¹⁵⁶). In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the title is specifically applied to Holy Roman Emperors, as in ASC C 982:

& þy ilcan gear for Odda [Otto II] Romana **casere** to Greclande & þa gemette he þara Sarcena mycele fyrde . . . & þa gefeah se casere wið hi. [. . .] se wæs haten Odda, and he wæs Leodulfes

sunu æþelinges, and se Leodulf wæs þæs ealdan Oddan sunu and Eadweardes cininges dohtor sunu.¹⁵⁷

The title was also used to contrast civil with divine authority, for example in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*;¹⁵⁸ in two poetic instances it was applied to God directly (*Phoenix* and *The Lord's Prayer II*).¹⁵⁹ Overall, *casere*, like its Latin equivalent *imperator*, was used to refer to all-encompassing authority.

The Old English royal style *wealdend* occurs once only, in a charter by King Æthelred (S 914): 'Ic Æðelred mid Godes gyfe Angelðeode cyning . . . wealdend . eac oðra iglanda ðe her abutan licgað';¹⁶⁰ *wealdend* here translating the Latin *monarchus*. In the sense of ruler, *wealdend* occurs frequently in poetry, but it is mainly found outside the poetic corpus, for example in Ælfric's homilies and Lives of Saints. This style is perhaps more interesting as a compound noun with *bryten-* or *bret-* to form *brytenwalda*/*bretwalda*.

The term *bretwalda* (or its variant spellings) appears twice in one charter (S 427, Latin and Old English versions), in the royal style of the dispositive section: 'MID Godæs gifæ Ic ÆþELSTAN Ongolsaxna cyning . . . brytænwalda eallæs ðyses Iglandæs þurh Godæs sælene and ealra his halegra' (translating the Latin *Ego Æðelstanus rex et rector totius huius britannie insule largiente domino et omnibus eius sanctis*); and in the subscription: 'Æþelstan Ongolsaxna cyning and brytenwalda ealles þyses iglandæs þurh Godæs gifæ þis gesætte and gefestnedæ mid Cristæs rodætacnæ'. S 427 dates from 934, when Athelstan had already established himself as supreme ruler, having subjected and received pledges of loyalty from Hywel of the West Welsh, Constantine of the Scots, Owain of Gwent and Ealdred from Bamburgh (ASC D 927). The Old English translation of the royal style is not quite accurate (*rector* does not have the geographical reach of *brytænwalda*), and neither version appears to be a direct translation of the other, although the charter itself may have an authentic basis.¹⁶¹

To a significant degree, the investigation into Anglo-Saxon notions of overlordship has focused on this term. Although it is used by neither Bede nor his translator, its origin is seen to derive from the passage in II.5 of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in which Bede lists the seven overkings in Britain.¹⁶² The only time (outside the charters) *bretwalda* does appear is in the annal for 827 (for 829) in the ASC, where it has several different spellings: *Bretwalda* (A), *Brytenwalda* (B), *Bretenanwealda* (C), *Brytenwealda* (D & E) and *Brytenweald* (F).¹⁶³ It is hence impossible to determine which word is the original and whether the intended meaning refers to a 'wide/powerful' ruler or to a ruler of 'Britain'.¹⁶⁴ Set against the actual dominion of the kings thus designated, one can say that they enjoyed a far-reaching authority, in comparison to other either contemporary or later kings. However, none of them actually succeeded in subduing the whole of Britain so that the first interpretation seems more justified. Also, this dominion could have been limited to all territories south of the Humber; indeed, Egbert is styled *bretwalda* in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* before his conquest of Northumbria, so that the term to all appearances refers to a Southern overlordship only.¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the basis for such an appellation is the rather abstract meaning of the superior authority of one ruler over other kings.¹⁶⁶ Overall, it was short-lived and was already replaced by the more suitable term of *rex/cyning* during the eighth century.¹⁶⁷ The chronicler of the abovementioned annal was probably driven to emulate Egbert's achievements by endowing him with a title that would link him with the powerful kings of Bede's day.

The Legitimation Formula in the Royal Styles

The legitimation formula is that part of the royal style which expresses the notion that the title bearer owes his position to the grace of God.¹⁶⁸ As has been demonstrated, the functional titles themselves reveal a closeness to the divine, but the direct and explicit invocation of God's presence is all the more powerful and thus enhances and emphasises any political idea the ruler wanted to express. Yet God's grace does not constitute a right that the ruler could claim or, in a theological sense, a promise of salvation.¹⁶⁹ Like everyone else, the ruler had to work and strive continuously to merit this grace, and if he lost it, woe would befall him and his kingdom.

The origin of this formula can be traced back to the religious devotional formulas of late antiquity.¹⁷⁰ Gregory of Nyssa (c.335–395) was the first to employ such a formula in reference to himself – the original text is lost, but a Latin translation from before 410 includes *divina gratia* in the episcopal style.¹⁷¹ The formula was employed with greater frequency following the rise of the Pelagian heresy as proof that bishops held the correct theological view on the grace of God and its relation to human merit.¹⁷² From its religious usage, it was but a short step for kings to adopt the formula and include it in their royal styles. With the rise of Christianity, the traditional legitimation of rulership out of acclamation or bloodline was displaced with the understanding that true legitimation could only arise out of God, and was hence deeply and inextricably anchored within the divine grace and salvation. As a paraphrase of Prov 8:15 ('per me reges regnant', that is, 'by me kings reign'), rulership was placed distinctly under God's command and within His grace. The employment of the formula by worldly rulers linked both the secular and the ecclesiastical realms, and endowed the formula with a distinct political justification of rulership. No other device better expresses the concept of theocratic rulership: the inclusion of a divine invocation within the royal style simultaneously subjects the king to the ecclesiastical sphere but also elevates him above all others and above everything else.

While it may be problematic to speak of 'religious' and 'political' devotional (that is, legitimation) formulas in the early Middle Ages, the existence of a distinct and very obvious political function of this formula cannot be denied. The formula not only expresses indebtedness to divine mercy but, most importantly, legitimacy, especially in times of social upheaval. The religious meaning of the formula was expressively used to make a political statement in the face of adversity, to proclaim anew the rightfulness of rule, to remind the subjects to whom they are bound by law, and not just human law but God's law.

The legitimation formula was first explicitly used as political instrument under the Carolingians. Pippin's assumption of power from the puppet-king Childeric II in 751 necessitated a legitimation of rulership other than through descent from a *stirps regia*. The papal anointing set him up as king and legitimated his usurpation of the throne, but a more constant and continuous instrument was necessary. The interpretation of this act of state as execution of the divine will and its subsequent papal confirmation resulted in the 'appropriation' of the divine grace as 'blood-sacredness' (*Geblütsheiligkeit*). Although Pippin himself did not employ the formula, to avoid potential insults to all those who knew him (and still saw him) as the mayor of the palace,¹⁷³ its regular use was already prepared in his charters. In the proems, Pippin is designated as Christian ruler which is a preliminary stage to the *gratia Dei* style of his sons and successors.¹⁷⁴ The oldest Carolingian original with this formula is a charter by Carloman from 22 March 769.¹⁷⁵

Since the Carolingians legitimated their rule out of divine grace, the formula did not allow for great variation or even omission from the royal style. All extant west-Frankish charters employ a legitimation formula, and this formula was only ever adapted or changed when the political situation itself changed (for example, the succession of a new king or usurpation of the throne).¹⁷⁶ These changes, however, were slight compared to those of Anglo-Saxon rulers so that an influence of its usage from Francia on Anglo-Saxon rulers or vice versa can be virtually excluded. Furthermore, the reason for employing it differed greatly: the Carolingians needed it to legitimate their rulership; the Anglo-Saxon kings used it chiefly to express the source of their power.

The Legitimation Formula in Anglo-Saxon Royal Charters

The legitimation formula refers to the function of the title bearer and as such is placed before the functional title itself.¹⁷⁷ In Anglo-Saxon England, the formula was employed as early as 688 in a basically authentic diploma by Cædwalla of Wessex (S 235), or even earlier if we assume the royal style to be authentic in some spurious diplomas.¹⁷⁸ The inclusion of the legitimation formula by kings may go back to the episcopal devotional formula in early ecclesiastical charters, letters and synodal documents.¹⁷⁹ In total, almost half of the charters employ a variant of the legitimation formula in the royal style of the dispositive section.¹⁸⁰ This amount makes it difficult to establish a typology, especially since in later Anglo-Saxon times the formula was embellished to include several references to the divine grace. The categorisation as set out here is thus a means to handle the mass of information rather than a definite and exclusive classification.

There are 30 variants of the formula, excluding any single occurrences (twenty-one instances) and Old English equivalents (eight times, mostly vernacular versions of Latin charters); the variants are listed in Table 3 in the Appendix. It is not my intention here to discuss each single variant, or their origins. Instead, the following will outline the ‘lifespan’ of certain formulae according to their distribution throughout the charter corpus, and then to deduce the political intentions of their users, especially with regard to the historical and social context of the relevant charters. Of course, it is one of the idiosyncrasies of Anglo-Saxon scribes to employ formulae from charters of long-gone predecessors so that certain variants resurface throughout the four centuries under consideration here. A few general assessments can be made, however: the legitimation formulas up to the end of the ninth century are fairly simple with little embellishment. It is only from Athelstan onwards that the formulas begin to include literary flourishes and advancements from the simple *gratia Dei* to the more elaborate *omnisonantis dexteram*. There are only about ten variants that were developed and used in the tenth century while all the other variants occur intermittently throughout.¹⁸¹ Two variants appear to have been particular favourites with the Wessex royal house: *Dei misericordia* and *Deo regnante*, the former being used by Æthelwulf and Alfred of Wessex, Edward the Elder and Athelstan, and the latter by Cenwalh, Cædwalla and Ine of Wessex and Athelstan as well. Only two variants were not used beyond the end of the eighth century: *Deo adjuvante* and *Dei praedestinante*.

The different variants of the legitimation formula demonstrate the Christian legitimation of rulership, on the one hand, and the propagation of a certain concept of rulership, on the other. They are an expression of the ruler’s changing understanding of divine sanction and appointment. Broadly speaking, the formulas reveal a different level of divine engagement in the ruler’s appointment, and hence a different attitude towards God’s role in the

royal succession. This divine involvement is variously expressed, from a rather passive stance to a more active function. The formulas *divina allubescence/collubescence* and *divina adridente* show neither divine support nor divine resistance, but mere divine pleasure at the current status quo. The references to *Dei prædistantia* and *Dei providentia*, although scarce, reveal rulership to be a pre-ordained duty and the ruler as pre-ordained individual, which justifies and explains the ways with which a person succeeded to the throne.¹⁸² A more direct involvement of God in the royal appointments is visible in the phrases *Dei concedente*, *Christi annuente* and *Divina indulgente*. The first two, in particular, reveal that God has the power to dethrone a king again should he fail to fulfil his duties adequately. Kingship is here presented as something that must be gained and merited throughout the reign, as something that has only been granted as a result of good rule not as its pre-condition.

Several phrases denote divine help and support in royal succession, including *Divino fultus/fulciente*, *Deo adjuvante*, *Dei nutu*, *Dei ammiculante* and *Dei opitulante*. Here, God is presented as one of the authorities that make kings, or more precisely the one that casts the deciding vote. Whoever has gained God's help will be king. Even more explicit are the following phrases, *Dei dispensatione*, *Deo disponente*, *Divino gubernante* and *Dei dispositione*. God is presented here as the only authority to decide who will be king. Kingship is an office to which only the most suitable candidate succeeds, and it is God alone who chooses and appoints. Thus, any earthly involvement is excluded and any revolt against the king is forbidden from the outset as a violation of God's will. This direct appointment is also visible in the phrases that refer to the right hand of God, *omnipatrantis dexteram*, *omnitanantis dexteram* and *omnipotentis dexteram*. These phrases are only used from the tenth century onwards and can be understood as referring to the divine anointment of the ruler.¹⁸³

Kingship as office was occasionally equated to being a divine gift, especially in the following phrases, *Deo donante*, *Dei dono/donifluo*, *Christo largiente* and *Christo conferente*. Kingship as gift evokes associations of a bilateral agreement. As demonstrated in anthropological theories and studies on gift exchange, a gift creates obligation but once given cannot be taken back.¹⁸⁴ Upon accepting the gift of rulership, the king is obliged to be a good ruler and to prove himself worthy of this gift. At the same time, however, it cannot be reclaimed but has to be endured. A few charters, for example, contain references to 'merit' in the royal style, stating that kingship results not out of any distinction but due to the grace of God.¹⁸⁵ Kings attained their kingship *although* they consider themselves and their royal deeds as insufficient or unworthy of the divine grace. Here, they humble themselves in the eyes of the public which in turn augments the grace that was bestowed upon them and thus boosts the ruler image.

Functions of the Legitimation Formula

As these variants reveal, the principal reason for employing a legitimation formula was its expression of the Christian legitimation of rulership. Most, if not all, Anglo-Saxon royal dynasties had already been established when the several kingdoms converted to Christianity. There was thus no need to refer to God or the divine will to justify rulership. Instead, the usage of the legitimation formula reflects the ruler's attitude towards Christianity and his function within the Christian framework of society. It was not politically, but rather religiously, or even morally, motivated. Following the frequency

of the occurrence of these formulae in the extant charters, one can argue that the more Christianity was anchored within society, the more rulers would refer to the divine appointment.¹⁸⁶

Apart from the king's integration into a new belief system, there is another reason for using a legitimisation formula: that of monarchical propaganda. This function has received only intermittent attention to date, although it certainly merits a more detailed consideration. The Byzantine imperial charter has been examined in regard to its expression of political concepts as well as its portrayal of the Byzantine emperor as head of Church and State.¹⁸⁷ Rulership is not only staged in elaborate public ceremonies, but also on coins and charters which transported a certain ruler image throughout the realm.¹⁸⁸ The charter is here a carefully constructed document of promotion, with each of its elements being capable of propagating certain ideas and concepts. These are expressed in the total royal style, the dispositive section, the subscription list and also the proem. The latter, in particular, contains no obvious references to political notions, but it includes what is commonly known as general wisdom or public opinion on widely different topics, even political ones.¹⁸⁹ Their formal character and diction also reveals a closeness, even indebtedness, to sacral language, which is why some proems appear so rigid and inflexible in their style or even pieced together from several models: scribes literally did not dare to change existing formulas due to their semi-sacral character.¹⁹⁰ The dispositive sections can also contain several political statements. A grant made for the remedy of the king's soul shows insight into his moral motivations and hence sheds light on his virtues. A grant made with the obligation to clothe and feed the deserving poor expresses a dimension of care over the ruler's subjects. A thorough investigation into all parts of the charter would yield many more such insights. One has to bear in mind that no part of the charter, in particular those closely connected with any statements on rulership, is arbitrary or random, even if scribes chose from older models; they are effectively a mirror image of kingship.¹⁹¹

It is in Æthelred's charters that both these functions, of divine legitimisation and royal propaganda, were combined to accentuate his rulership beyond the traditionally conveyed image of the unlucky king. From history and the somewhat biased accounts in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as well as other texts, we know of the troubled reign of Æthelred. His charters have been analysed in regard to their socio-historical context and in terms of how far they shed light on his reign.¹⁹² An investigation into the royal *intitulationes* reveals even more facets of Æthelred's kingship. The number of his charters that include the legitimisation formula is rather high in comparison to his predecessors. While this might reflect the successful transformation of the secular ruler into an ecclesiastical role-model king, as has been argued for Edgar,¹⁹³ it is far more likely that Æthelred continuously tried to legitimise his rulership by referring to the divine appointment. Legitimate rulership derives either out of the divine sanction or from other sources, usually the father (that is the preceding king) or even a co-regent.¹⁹⁴ In Æthelred's case, however, his legitimisation does not only derive from his father but from his collective predecessors, even down to the Mercian rulers.

It was natural for newly instituted kings to use the formulas and styles of their predecessors until their own rule had been firmly established and new formulas could be invented and applied.¹⁹⁵ This is particularly obvious with those formulas whose lifespan had already expired, but which were resurrected in Æthelred's reign and are detailed in the table below.¹⁹⁶

Legitimation formula	Use in royal charters
<i>Dei dignitate</i> – by the dignity/authority/majesty of God (4)	Ine of Wessex (1); Edgar (1); Æthelred (2)
<i>Divino gubernante</i> – by divine direction/governance (6)	Offa of Mercia (1); Berhtwulf of Mercia (1); Cædwalla of Wessex (1); Athelstan (1); Æthelred (2)
<i>Dei Misericordia</i> – by the mercy of God (5)	Æthelwulf of Wessex (1); Alfred of Wessex (1); Edward the Elder (1); Æthelred (2)
<i>Dei dono/doniflūo</i> – by the Gift/gift-flow of God (9)	Uhtred of the Hwicce (1); Coenred of Mercia (1); Offa of Mercia (3); Coenwulf of Mercia (1); Athelstan (2); Æthelred (1)
<i>Dei concedente</i> – by the concession of God	Offa of Mercia (5); Cenwulf of Mercia(1); Burgred of Mercia (4); Alfred of Wessex (1); Æthelred (1)

With the exception of the last two, the usage of older formulas in Æthelred's charters can be dated to the times when his reign began to run into trouble. Even when considering the scribal predilection for choosing older charters as models, the recourse to such long-bygone formulas shows an attempt to situate Æthelred's charters, and hence himself, within the long line of reputable rulers. Here, the royal styles of the predecessors legitimate the royal styles of the successors. By grounding his rulership in that of his forefathers, Æthelred participates in their legitimacy, but also in their achievements. The references to other great kings boost his own kingship and elevate him, at least in the charters, above temporal misery. Charters are meant for posterity and looking at his royal styles only, one would not arrive at the hapless *unræd* king.

The extent to which the legitimation formula within the royal style was employed by the early Anglo-Saxon kings of the seventh and eighth centuries has already been examined.¹⁹⁷ One conclusion is that political and social upheavals influence the application of legitimation formulas in royal charters, something which is exemplified in two charters issued by Offa. His grant of land in Kent to Bishop Eardwulf of Rochester (S 105; AD 764/possibly authentic) is seen as proof of the king's interest and first successful intervention in Kent. His royal style consequently doubly legitimises his grant: 'Offa rex Merciorum regali prosapia Merciorum oriundus atque omnipotentis dei dispensatione eiusdem constitutus in regem'.¹⁹⁸ Emphasis is placed here on the dynastic origins of Offa ('regali prosapia Merciorum') and the divine appointment of his rulership ('dei [. . .] ejusdem constitutus in regem'). The intervention is justified as divine intent and the grantor as divinely authorised. This notion finds an even stronger expression in S 139 (AD 793 x 796/authentic) in which Offa is styled as 'rex a rege reguum constitutus', 'appointed king by the King of kings'. This style states Offa's sovereignty as ruler, but also testifies to Offa's strong hold over the Church, as exemplified by the creation of the archbishopric of Lichfield, the frequent synods and the consecration of his son Ecgrith.¹⁹⁹ Similar to Æthelbald of Mercia, Offa's charters use the legitimation formula fairly frequently, showing not only the growing importance of the Church in Anglo-Saxon society, but also the understanding that royal rule is assigned out of God's grace, which has to be earned.²⁰⁰ In the earlier Anglo-Saxon era, the legitimation formula was used to justify certain political events and to legitimise their instigator.

In the later Anglo-Saxon period, however, divine legitimisation as the main reason of employing this formula was replaced by the idea of it expressing a divine reward. Rulers had now been firmly established as Christian and hence as reigning with God's assent. Now, divine grace was granted if the ruler fulfilled his duties correctly. The legitimisation formula can be interpreted as a third divine invocation in the charters, next to the pictorial and verbal ones. By including it in the royal style, God was appealed to 'act' on behalf of the king and grant mercy, especially in times of hardship. Hypothetically, then, the frequency of using it should increase the more difficult the times became. However, when comparing the occurrences of legitimisation formulas in charters against historical events as described in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, it appears that the more troubled a reign is the less often a legitimisation formula is used (see Table 4 in the Appendix).²⁰¹ While it is impossible to reach a definite conclusion, the table points to two trends: first, the number of charters that use the legitimisation formula is higher than those that do not in years with no recorded events or with events that did not bear upon the well-being of the kingdom, respectively. Second, in years of recorded trouble, the employment of the legitimisation formula was comparatively low. There are, of course, exceptions. Thus, in 937, the year of the battle of Brunanburh, an event that had significant political impact, Athelstan's eight charters mostly employ the legitimisation formula. Whether this indicates an invocation for divine help before the battle or a statement of divine reward after the victorious fight remains up for conjecture, although three can be dated to 21 December and hence after the battle. Indeed, the verification of this hypothesis depends to a large extent on the precise dating of charter and historical event. Yet the general rule seems to have been for the legitimisation formula to be excluded specifically in times of war and battle and actions that do not befit a Christian king.²⁰² On these occasions, kings did not correspond to the ecclesiastical ruler image and hence they did not earn the divine grace and were accordingly not justified to proclaim it in their royal styles. The exclusion of the legitimisation formula could thus be seen as value judgement and, in reference to the propagandising dimension of charters, to 'keeping a low profile'.

Within the wider context of Christian rulership in Anglo-Saxon England, this reveals the change Christianity wrought upon kings and their kingship as well as a changing grasp of the idea of divine grace. In the earlier Anglo-Saxon period, kings were converted and introduced to the new faith and then slowly modelled according to an ecclesiastical understanding of kingship. Offa is probably the most successful example of this remodelling. In the later period, the Christian concept of kingship was firmly anchored in the royal persona and an established part of royal education. Divine legitimacy was thus already given, implicitly at least, particularly since the need for authenticating one's dynasty had become obsolete and there were no longer any other competing kings that could claim this legitimacy for themselves. Instead, divine grace is understood as a mark that has to be earned. Kingship is legitimated by good rulership. As stated above, divine grace could not be claimed, but had to be achieved. The usage of the formula can be understood in terms of earning and losing grace,²⁰³ an ecclesiastical evaluation of rulership and as such a reflection of a two-stage process in the development of the concept of kingship: the divine legitimisation to emphasise rightful rule, and only then the bestowal of divine favours to reward correct rule.

The Legitimation Formula in Episcopal Charters and Subscriptions

The legitimation formula had its origins in ecclesiastical documents and, from the fifth century onwards, it was used to express the anti-Pelagian attitude and a strict commitment to orthodoxy. It served a distinct political function within the ecclesiastical community: through its use, bishops showed adherence to a certain belief system and also sided with a certain religious faction. Although the Pelagian heresy had been banned at the Council at Ephesus (431), it was still influential in the sixth century and beyond; even Bede devotes some chapters to it and its 'evil' teachings.²⁰⁴ According to him, the Pelagian heresy had gained a particular stronghold in Britain, especially among the Hiberno-Scottish missionaries. The episcopal legitimation formula continued to retain its anti-Pelagian assertion and only later began to specify more general group dynamics within the wider Anglo-Saxon church community. Continental documents show that the formula's aspect of grace retreated into the background while the idea of a certain divine intervention in achieving an ecclesiastical office gained prominence.²⁰⁵

In Anglo-Saxon England, the employment of the legitimation formula in ecclesiastical charters and episcopal subscriptions in royal charters has a second function. During the time of the conversion, in particular, it was important that bishops asserted their episcopal authority in opposition to kings. Using the legitimation formula simultaneously expressed the achievement of divine grace by the office-holder as well as the institution into the office by a higher power than the local king. This, of course, gave bishops a powerful stance in their relationship with kings, although kings were rarely intimidated by it. The political significance of divine grace (and of those who could claim it) was such that even kings began to covet it.²⁰⁶ Unfortunately, there is no extant episcopal charter using the legitimation formula in the episcopal style that pre-dates the first extant royal charter (S 235; AD 688/authentic; Cædwalla). There are, however, earlier royal charters with an episcopal subscription that employ the *gratia Dei* formula, the earliest with a strong claim to authenticity is S 71 from 681, in the name of Æthelred of Mercia, and subscribed by 'Theodorus gratia Dei archiepiscopus' (of Canterbury). This is, however, a rare occurrence. Of all the royal charters here investigated, only 68 contain an episcopal *gratia Dei* subscription (or a variant of the formula), and 63 of these pre-date the ninth century.²⁰⁷ The employment of the formula may thus originate out of religio-political considerations on the part of the ecclesiastic. First, they add greater legitimacy and authority to the bishop in opposition to kings (pagan or recently converted as well as recently instituted) by emphasising the greater weight of the Church as the older institution: the pivot here is the difference between legitimacy out of blood as opposed to legitimacy out of God. Second, these formulas guard the gift of land as conveyed in the charter: by referring to the divine grace in the subscription, bishops added credibility and hence inspired trust in this new administrative document.

The legitimation formula was also used to make a political statement in opposition to the actions of kings. Offa's intervention in Kent and his creation of the archbishopric of Lichfield did not meet with approval from Jænberht, archbishop of Canterbury. In Offa's Kentish charters only Jænberht is styled as 'gratia Dei archiepiscopus'.²⁰⁸ The newly minted archbishop of Lichfield, Hygeberht, is not even acknowledged as such in three charters and only later is he accorded this status, albeit still without the *gratia Dei* formula.²⁰⁹ In comparison, Æthelheard, the Mercian successor of Jænberht, is only ever styled archbishop. In strong opposition to Offa, Jænberht emphasises his official

appointment by God, thereby protesting against Offa's subjection of Kent and refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy and authority of the see at Lichfield. The political range of the legitimisation formula is enhanced still further when comparing the episcopal usage with the royal one. Offa employs it in almost half of his charters, but in only one of the Kentish charters subscribed by Jænberht (S 127). Apart from this, six other charters of Offa contain the legitimisation formula in the royal style as well as in the episcopal subscription.²¹⁰ Offa's style was almost deliberately pared down in those Kentish charters attested by Jænberht to limit his own assertion of dominion over Kent as well as curbing any statements that could give reason for offence.

This last observation can also be applied to the charters of other earlier kings. It is a very rare occurrence that both king and bishop are styled using the legitimisation formula. Apart from those by Offa, there are only fifteen others up to the last quarter of the ninth century and a further three in the tenth.²¹¹ There are other reasons behind inclusion or non-inclusion, as, for example, the convention of the scribe or scriptorium and the models used. However, a similar political motivation to that of Jænberht might be found in those of Coenwulf of Mercia's charters attested by Wulfred, archbishop of Canterbury and disputatious opponent of the king.²¹² From about 825 onwards, the inclusion of the legitimisation formula in both royal style and episcopal subscription increases slightly, which might indicate a relatively peaceful agreement between the secular and ecclesiastical lords since both refer to the same divine grace. In general, the more royal styles include the *gratia Dei* formula, the less it is employed by bishops and archbishops. In the episcopal charters from the tenth century, it is almost only Oswald, bishop of Worcester and later archbishop of York, who employs it rather consistently.²¹³ With the fully established authority of the Church, bishops did not require a further legitimating instrument, which might explain the absence of the formula. Furthermore, as argued above, the reference to the divine grace was used to evaluate royal actions and hence became unsuitable for bishops, especially since the conferral of the episcopal office was not the reward of divine grace but its cause.²¹⁴

Conclusion

As complete "p.r. works"²¹⁵ charters carry far more political information than it has been possible to address here. Much depends on the authenticity of the charters, and for many no concluding or satisfying answer has been reached. The fondness of Anglo-Saxon scribes for borrowing phrases from older charters in their archives makes it sometimes difficult to establish when a particular style either came into use or fell out of favour. Likewise, the sheer amount of extant charters can thwart a discussion of the use and implications of every title and its diplomatic and historical context. The present analysis has shown that many royal styles have been borrowed from the ecclesiastical realm (for example, *rector* and *primicerius*). This is unsurprising when considering that most, if not all scribes received their training at some point or other in a monastery or another ecclesiastical environment. The styles for King Eadwig are more experimental and hence irregular than those of all other kings, which complicates any statements on political notions current during his reign. Æthelred's charters most often employ styles used by his predecessors. Weaker kings, in particular, tried to legitimise their power by employing

traditional and hence accepted formulae.²¹⁶ Since the middle and later years of Æthelred's reign were rather troublesome, his scribes and draftsmen might have found it wiser to use older and established forms of the royal *intitulatio* rather than to experiment with new ones which might not have found acceptance among its recipients. Lastly, this analysis has also shown that many functional titles already contain a certain divine legitimation so that an extra legitimation formula becomes superfluous or at least unnecessary. Likewise, titles without explicit reference to the divine were employed to denote Christ and God, so that their usage also enhances the royal authority. Thus, with the introduction of these titles, kings could always rest confidently in divine grace since by their very appellation they were already placed closer to God.

The *gratia Dei* formula is the most religious element of the royal style. It expresses the notion that all power ultimately derives from God and that all royal power rests in God. The charters employ this formula inconsistently, since, unlike their Carolingian counterparts, their political statement was of rather different value. Anglo-Saxon kings did not predominantly employ the legitimation formula to legitimise their own power, although in specific circumstances this was certainly the case. Rather, the formula is used to evaluate the actions and behaviour of a king. Whereas kings previously used to 'demand' some divine sign or miracle before they would convert to Christianity, divine grace now became an instrument of reward, not enticement. At first, the reference to divine grace was used to emphasise a certain ecclesiastical ruler image and to push the ruler towards a religiously inspired concept of authority. After kings had embraced this new concept, divine grace became a means to bestow reward and approval; that is, it began to express correct royal rule. Kings behaving badly or in opposition to the ecclesiastical model of kingship did not earn divine grace and hence the formula was not applied to them. Furthermore, changes in the formula itself, from *gratia Dei* to *per omnitonantis dexteram*, reveal stages in the divine involvement of bestowing grace. Divine grace appears to be more 'active' in phrases such as *Deo disponente* or *Divino gubernante*, thereby revealing the prominent role religion had attained in the making of kings. Lastly, the political meaning of the legitimation formula becomes clear when its royal usage is compared with that of bishops. In the early centuries, bishops used it to enforce Christianity in a surrounding that was still pagan. However, the more kings employed the formula, the less bishops did so. As a sign of reward of good royal deeds, the formula could not simultaneously be employed for bishops to denote orthodox faith. Instead, it was absorbed into the secular sphere as a useful means to reprove or approve of kings.

While the royal *intitulationes* form an important part of the expression of such notions, several other charter elements also contain information. The proems, for example, set the charters in a Christian context, not only through their mention of the need for alms-giving and charity, but also, and principally, by placing the grant within a Christian framework of salvational history. Grants made for the welfare of one's soul or for specifically religious purposes shed light on the relationship between king and God. The idea of kingship as divine favour then turns such grants into tributes to God's benevolence, a means to maintain or regain a good relationship with the divine. This relationship also finds expression in the religious sanction and anathema of the charter. The charter is a secular document, conveying secular rights; nevertheless, the punishment for violation is religious, conveying the notion that behind the power of the king stands the authority of God.

Notes

- ¹ *Life Wilfrid*, ch. 17: 'Then St Wilfrid the bishop stood in front of the altar, and turning to the people, in the presence of kings, read out clearly a list of the lands which the kings, for the good of their souls, had previously, and on that very day as well presented to him, with the agreement and over the signatures of the bishops and all the chief men [...] It was truly a gift well pleasing to God that the pious kings had assigned so many lands to our bishop for the service of God' (trsl. Bertram Colgrave, *The 'Life of Bishop Wilfrid' by Eddius Stephanus* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927], pp. 36f). This event probably took place between 671 and 678.
- ² Colgrave, *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. x.
- ³ Mark Mersiowsky, 'Towards a Reappraisal of Carolingian Sovereign Charters', p. 20, in Karl Heidecker (ed.), *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 15–25.
- ⁴ Albert Bruckner, 'Zur Diplomatik der älteren angelsächsischen Urkunde', *Archivalische Zeitschrift* 61 (1965), pp. 11–45, here p. 17.
- ⁵ Harry Bresslau, *Handbuch der Urkundenlehre*, 2 Vols. (Berlin: deGruyter, 1912 [2nd ed. Vol. I] and 1958 [3rd ed. Vol. II]), Vol. I, p. 1: 'Urkunden nennen wir im Sinne der nachfolgenden Darlegungen schriftliche, unter Beobachtung bestimmter, wenn auch nach der Verschiedenheit von Person, Ort, Zeit und Sache wechselnder Formen aufgezeichnete Erklärungen, die bestimmt sind, als Zeugnisse über Vorgänge rechtlicher Natur zu dienen' (trsl. in Heidecker, *Use of the Written Word*, p. 2).
- ⁶ See Sawyer's *Concordance (Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* [London: Royal Historical Society, 1968]). The present discussion is limited to the charters by kings from S 1 (Æthelberht of Kent) to S 944 (Æthelred; S 945 and 946 of Æthelred have been excluded because they are writs) and, to a lesser extent, to those by the higher clergy (S 1244–1409). The charters of Æthelred, dux of Mercia, and Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, as well as a selection of other ducal charters, have been included where appropriate.
- ⁷ Susan E. Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word', p. 39, in Rosamond McKitterick (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 36–62.
- ⁸ Any quotes from charter texts have been taken from the Electronic Sawyer website: www.esawyer.org.uk (accessed May 2017). Where relevant, the degree of authenticity, as far as has been established, has been indicated for the purposes of the subsequent analysis. Any outright forgeries, pre- or post-Conquest, have been excluded. The premise is that scribes would copy existing formulas rather than invent completely new ones to give 'their' charters the most authentic appearance. Thus, charters that have been declared suspicious, spurious or fabricated, but containing authentic elements or basis have been included even when these authentic elements cannot be established beyond doubt or certainty. Even if certain formulae had not been current at the charter's purported date, their inclusion nevertheless suggests the relevance of the formula's statement at the actual date of production and hence still points toward current political thought. The Sawyer concordance lists the comments for each charter in abbreviated form, and the new *Anglo-Saxon Charters* editions discuss the authenticity of charters in great detail. For a general discussion on the authenticity of charters, see Pierre Chaplais, 'The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma', pp. 28–42 and 'Some Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas on Single Sheets: Originals or Copies?', pp. 63–87 (both in Felicity Ranger [ed.], *Prisca Munimenta. Studies in Archival and Administrative History Presented to Dr A.E.J. Hollaender* [London: London University Press, 1973]) and Ben Snook, *The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: The History, Language and Production of Anglo-Saxon Charters from Alfred to Edgar* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2015), pp. 11–16.
- ⁹ See Pierre Chaplais, 'Who Introduced Charters into England? The Case for Augustine', in Ranger, *Prisca Munimenta*, pp. 88–107, and Anton Scharer, *Die angelsächsische Königsurkunde im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 26 (Wien: Böhlau, 1982), pp. 55ff.

- ¹⁰ One could thus ask what would happen to church lands if the king apostatised or a pagan son succeeded to the throne. The lack of early charters might be due to two facts: either they were written on papyrus so they did not survive the wet climate long enough, or the troubled and interrupted history of most churches in the seventh century did not allow for a consistent charter survival. Cf. Nicholas Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters: The Work of the Last Twenty Years', *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1973), pp. 211–231, here pp. 216f, and Kelly, *Anglo-Saxon Lay Society*, pp. 40f.
- ¹¹ Scharer, *Königsurkunde*, p. 55.
- ¹² Kelly, *Anglo-Saxon Lay Society*, p. 40.
- ¹³ Scharer, *Königsurkunde*, p. 51, and Chaplais, *Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas*, pp. 69–72. This is usually the penalty of excommunication and punishment in the next life.
- ¹⁴ Chaplais, *Origin and Authenticity*, pp. 34f.
- ¹⁵ Kelly, *Anglo-Saxon Lay Society*, pp. 43f.
- ¹⁶ Brooks, 'Anglo-Saxon Charters', p. 212.
- ¹⁷ On the workings of the *witan*, see, for example, Levi Roach, *Kingship and Consent in Anglo-Saxon England, 871–978: Assemblies and the State in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), Simon Keynes, 'Church Councils, Royal Assemblies, and Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas', pp. 17–182, and Alaric Trousdale, 'Being Everywhere at Once: Delegation and Royal Authority in Late Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 275–296, both in Gale Owen-Crocker and Brian W. Schneider (eds.), *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2013).
- ¹⁸ See Bruckner, *Diplomatik*, pp. 42–45.
- ¹⁹ Bresslau, *Handbuch Vol. II*, pp. 214f. It would have been rather awkward if the witnesses had to witness the whole production process, especially when several charters were issued during one meeting.
- ²⁰ Herwig Wolfram, 'Political Theory and Narrative in Charters', *Viator* 26 (1995), pp. 39–51, here pp. 39f. He adds that they have the capability of becoming total symbols of lordship with all their elements carrying political meaning (p. 42). See Table 1 in the Appendix for the royal styles in Anglo-Saxon charters.
- ²¹ Mersiowsky, 'Carolingian Sovereign Charters', p. 23.
- ²² It seems indeed fair to assume that, apart from ecclesiastical beneficiaries, the majority of recipients were unable to decipher them.
- ²³ This is especially true when land conveyed by charter was bequeathed with the document, but without changing the original beneficiary's name to the new owner.
- ²⁴ Similarly, the symbolic power of coins; see chapter 1.
- ²⁵ This is referred to as process of observation and socialisation. See the preface in Petra Schulte, Marco Mostert and Irene van Renswoude (eds.), *Strategies of Writing: Studies on Text and Trust in the Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), pp. xif.
- ²⁶ J. W. Burgers, 'Trust in Writing: Charters in the Twelfth-Century County of Holland', p. 123, in Schulte, *Strategies in Writing*, pp. 111–131.
- ²⁷ Brigitte M. Bedos-Rezak, 'Medieval Identity: a Sign and a Concept', *The American Historical Review* 105 (2000), 63 pars, here pars 21.
- ²⁸ One could argue that the scribe interrupts this link by being the actual one who writes. According to Bedos-Rezak, however, the scribe as *persona fictiva* retains his third-person standing and does not personify or embody the donor in any way (*Medieval Identity*, pars 22f).
- ²⁹ Scharer, for example, has done this for Æthelbald and Offa of Mercia (*Königsurkunde*, pp. 143–278, and 'Die *Intitulaciones* der angelsächsischen Könige im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert', pp. 49–64, in Herwig Wolfram and Anton Scharer [eds.], *Intitulatio III: Lateinische Herrschertitel und Herrschertitulaturen vom siebten bis zum dreizehnten Jahrhundert*. MIÖG-Ergänzungsband 29 [Wien: Böhlau, 1988], pp. 9–74).
- ³⁰ S 54 (AD 706/forgery; authentic basis), 55 (AD 757/forgery; authentic elements), 58 (AD 767/authentic), 59 (AD 770/perhaps authentic), 60 (AD 770/spurious), 61 (AD 764 x 774/spurious) and 62 (AD 770 x 780/authentic). In S 56 (AD 759/original), the rulers are unstyled in the dispositive section but are called *regulus* in the subscription; in S 63 (AD 757 x 774/possibly

- authentic) Ealdred is unstyled in both dispositive and subscriptive sections and in S 57 (AD 756 for 777 x 779/perhaps authentic; authentic elements and basis) Uhtred is referred to as holding the control over his own people of the Hwicce ('regimen propriæ gentis Huiccorum tenens').
- ³¹ In S 70 (AD 671 for ?679/authentic), a charter by Æthelred of Mercia and perhaps also in S 1165 (AD 672 x 674/probably authentic), a grant by Frithuwald, *subregulus* of Surrey.
- ³² S 1255 (AD 774/authentic) and 1429 (AD 736 x 737/authentic). Since both were issued after the death of Oshere, when the demotion of the kingdom had already been fully accomplished, the style might represent early eighth-century notions rather than the political realities of the last quarter of the seventh century.
- ³³ S 102; AD 716 x 717/authentic.
- ³⁴ For Uhtred e.g. S 148 (AD 796/authentic) and for Ealdred e.g. S 141 (AD 777 x 792/not authentic; authentic basis). Eanberht does not attest any external charters. Cf. Ælfric in his Grammar: 16.16: *sume naman synd diminutia . . . rex cyning, regulus lytel cyning* oððe undercyning.
- ³⁵ S 396 (926/authentic) and 397 (926/authentic); the lands concerned are five hides at Chalgrave and Tebworth, Bedfordshire (S 396) and sixty hides at Hope and Ashford, Derbyshire (S 397).
- ³⁶ S 367 by King Edward Elder; S 395–397, 407 & 437 by Athelstan; S 483, 484 & 495 by Edmund; S 517a, 517b, 520, 522a, 533, 544, 548, 556, 566, 569 & 572 by Eadred; S 592, 595, 615, 623, 628, 646, 649 & 659 by Eadwig; S 674, 676, 679, 681, 703, 712, 712a, 716, 717, 737, 739, 749, 750, 768, 772, 776, 779–782, 792 & 794; and S 834, 882, 888, 900, 906, 907, 912, 914, 915, 919, 922–924, 926, 928, 931, 931a & 931b by Æthelred
- ³⁷ See e.g. S 544 (AD 949/authentic), 548 (AD 949/authentic) and 569 (AD 955/authentic).
- ³⁸ See Keynes (*The Diplomas of King Athelred the Unready* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980], pp. 154–162) for Æthelred's counsellors. See also his *Atlas*, in which he lists witness according to their appearance in charters (*An Atlas of Attestations in Anglo-Saxon Charters, c.670–1066* [Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic Publications, 1998, revised ed.]).
- ³⁹ See, for example, S 290 (AD 841 for 840/authentic), 333 (AD 864/possibly authentic) and 933 (AD 1014/possibly authentic).
- ⁴⁰ Mary O'Donovan (ed.), *Charters of Sherborne*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 10.
- ⁴¹ S 745 & 746. Cf. Sean Miller, (ed.), *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 95–116, and Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 7 & 8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000–2001), Vol. 8, pp. 405f. See also chapter 3 on queenship.
- ⁴² Miller, *New Minster Charters*, p. 108.
- ⁴³ Cf. also the comments made by Yorke on similar implications of the queen's status in regard to the disputed succession of Athelstan ('Æthelwold and the Politics of the Tenth Century', pp. 69–71, in Barbara Yorke (ed.), *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence* [Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988], pp. 65–88).
- ⁴⁴ Quoted from Björn Weiler and Simon MacLean (eds.), *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany*. International Medieval Research 16 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), p. 1.
- ⁴⁵ Herwig Wolfram, *Intitulatio I. Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des achten Jahrhunderts*. MIOG-Ergänzungsband 21 (Graz: Böhlau, 1967), pp. 25ff.
- ⁴⁶ See Scharer (*Intitulationes der angelsächsischen Könige*, pp. 11f) and Kleinschmidt ('Die Titulaturen englischer Könige im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert', pp. 79f, in Wolfram and Scharer, *Intitulatio III*, pp. 75–130).
- ⁴⁷ Kleinschmidt, *Titulaturen englischer Könige*, pp. 79–84. Regarding the Anglo-Saxon chancery, see, for example, Chaplais, 'The Anglo-Saxon Chancery: From the Diploma to the Writ', in Ranger, *Prisca Munimenta*, pp. 43–62, Chaplais, 'The Royal Anglo-Saxon "Chancery" of the Tenth Century Revisited', in Henry Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History Presented to R.H.C. Davis* (London: Hambledon, 1985), pp. 41–51, Richard Drögeleit, 'Gab es eine angelsächsische Königskanzlei?', *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* 13 (1935), pp. 335–436, Keynes, *Diplomas*, and Snook, *The Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, esp. pp. 46–49.

- ⁴⁸ Formularies contained exemplars of various documents for various purposes. The scribe would only need to select the appropriate model and fill in the blanks. Several are extant from the Continent, the most prominent being the Formulary of Marculf. See Alice Rio, *Legal Practice and the Written Word in the Early Middle Ages: Frankish Formulae c.500–1000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and her translation of the Angers and Marculf Formularies (*The Formularies of Angers and Marculf: Two Merovingian Legal Handbooks*. Translated Texts for Historians 46 [Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008]).
- ⁴⁹ In general, scribes liked to borrow formulas from available charters, not least to add authenticity. See the discussions on charters in the new editions which compare similarities across several archives.
- ⁵⁰ See Kleinschmidt for the influence of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oscytel on using a certain royal style (*Titulaturen englischer Könige*, pp. 89ff). See also Snook who states that ‘it is no longer possible to construct a viable, effective and credible argument against the existence of a centralised royal writing office during Æthelstan’s reign’ (*The Anglo-Saxon Chancery*, p. 59).
- ⁵¹ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, pp. 33f
- ⁵² Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, pp. 79f.
- ⁵³ from PIE base **reg-* ‘move in a straight line’, hence, ‘direct, rule, guide’ (cf. Skt. *raj-* ‘a king, a leader’; Avestan *razeyeiti* ‘directs’; Pers. *rahst* ‘right, correct’; L. *regere* ‘to rule’, *rex* ‘a king, a leader’, *rectus* ‘right, correct’; O.Ir. *ri*, Gaelic *righ* ‘a king’; Gaul. *-rix* ‘a king’, in personal names, e.g. *Vircingetorix*; Goth. *reiks* ‘a leader’; O.E. *rice* ‘kingdom’, *-ric* ‘king’, *rice* ‘rich, powerful’, *riht* ‘correct’; Goth. *raihts*, O.H.G. *recht*, O.Swed. *reht*, O.N. *rettr* ‘correct’ [<http://www.oed.com/>; accessed May 2017]).
- ⁵⁴ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, pp. 34ff.
- ⁵⁵ See Table 1 in the Appendix on royal styles.
- ⁵⁶ *Rector* derives from the past participle of Lat. *regere* (‘to rule’).
- ⁵⁷ William H. Stevenson (ed.), Asser’s *‘Life of King Alfred’: Together With the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1904), pp. 147–152.
- ⁵⁸ Isidore, Etym. IX.iii.
- ⁵⁹ De XII abusivis, no. 9: ‘it is proper for a king not to be unjust but to correct the unjust ones. In fact, the meaning of the name of king is to maintain this so that he fulfils the office of *rector* to all subjects’ (trsl. K.McC.).
- ⁶⁰ Luitpold Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne: Studies in Carolingian History and Literature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1959), p. 13.
- ⁶¹ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, pp. 243f.
- ⁶² Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 244.
- ⁶³ This charter is also at the centre of the debate around the use of the *imperator* title, which is discussed below.
- ⁶⁴ Given the remaining word ending, it might be possible that one of the following legitimization formulas might have been part of the title, all of which have been used at least once by Coenwulf: *Deo concedente, Dei largiente, Dei/Jesus Christus arridente*. Stengel suggests ‘Coenuulf ipso piissimo Deo largiente’ (‘Kaisertitel und Souveränitätsidee. Studien zur Vorgeschichte des modernen Staatsbegriffes’, *Deutsches Archiv* 3 [1939], pp. 1–56, here p. 4 n. 3).
- ⁶⁵ Ep. 123: ‘it is so appropriate for a king who is above others in rank to be above them also in moral perfection, justice and goodness. [. . .] Never forget him who raised you from poverty to be a ruler over the princes of his people. Realise that you are a shepherd and a steward of God’s gifts rather than a lord and master. Never forget the fine character of your noble predecessor, his modest way of life and his concern to reform the life of a Christian people. [. . .] Always honour Christ’s priests, illustrious monarch, for the more you respect the servants of Christ and the preachers of the word of God, the more will Christ, the true and good king, exalt and ensure your honour on the intercession of his saints’ (trsl. Stephen Allott, *Alcuin of York, c.AD 732–804: His Life and Letters* [York: William Sessions Ltd., 1974], no. 47).
- ⁶⁶ S 343a (AD 872/spurious, authentic elements) ‘Alfredus Rex Anglorum cæterarumque gentium in circuitu persistentium gubernator et rector’, and S 353 (AD 871 x 899/fabrication, authentic

- elements) ‘Ælfredus favente omnipotentis Dei clemencia Rex Anglorum ceterarumque provinciarum in circuitu persistencium rector ac gubernator gencium.’
- 67 Asser, *Dedication*.
- 68 Thus, in Asser, ch. 106, Alfred admonishes his judges upon pronouncing a wrong judgement and demands that they should study wisdom. Asser uses the word *correcti*.
- 69 S 404 (in the subscription list; AD 930/authentic basis), 420 (AD 933/spurious; authentic elements), 427 (AD 934/authentic basis) and 450 (AD 943 for 924 x 939/suspicious; authentic basis).
- 70 S 343a (AD 872/spurious; authentic elements) and 353 (AD979 for 978/possibly authentic). They both use formulae that originate in the tenth century.
- 71 S 404 (AD 930/authentic basis) and 933 (AD 1014/possibly authentic).
- 72 Peter Classen, ‘*Romanum Gubernans Imperium*. Zur Vorgeschichte der Kaisertitulatur Karls des Großen’, *Deutsches Archiv* 9 (1952), pp. 103–121, here p. 107.
- 73 Classen, *Romanum Gubernans Imperium*, p. 118. Boniface, *Carmen*, 2.34; Alcuin Ep. 60, 101, 113 and 174; in Ep. 101 he addresses Offa as ‘sapientissime populi Dei gubernator’, ‘most wise ruler of the people of God’ (trsl. EHD I no. 198); Aldhelm, *Prose Virginitate*, ch. 17.
- 74 There are just six occurrences, two in the sense of reigning or ruling (HE, IV.12 and V.12) and four times with religious references (HE, I. 24, II. 7, IV. 5 and IV 20 [18]).
- 75 *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio* VIII.25
- 76 Asser, ch. 91.
- 77 For example, in the second part of S 153 (a one-sentence proem; AD 798/possibly original), S 188 (invocation; AD 831/original), S 471 (proem; AD 940 for ? 943/possibly authentic), S 623 (proem; AD 956/authentic).
- 78 Stengel, *Kaisertitel und Souveränitätsidee*, p. 16, and ‘*Imperium and Imperator bei den Angelsachsen*’, *Deutsches Archiv* 16 (1960), pp. 15–72, here p. 17; Herwig Wolfram, ‘Lateinische Herrschertitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert’, p. 37, in Herwig Wolfram (ed.), *Intitulatio II. Lateinische Herrscher- und Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert*. MIOG-Ergänzungsband 24 (Graz: Böhlau, 1973), pp. 19–177.
- 79 Wolfram, *Lateinische Herrschertitel*, p. 37 (der hervorragendste kaiserliche Funktionstitel).
- 80 See Introduction. According to Einhardt, Charlemagne was rather reluctant to accept this title and was always very careful in using it in his letters to the Byzantine emperor so not to affront the latter (ch. 28).
- 81 Stengel, *Kaisertitel und Souveränitätsidee*, p. 12, referring to S 153 (AD 798/possibly original), Coenwulf’s charter.
- 82 Stengel, *Kaisertitel und Souveränitätsidee*, p. 3. See also Stengel, *Imperium und Imperator*, pp. 28–38.
- 83 Drögereit, *Kaiseridee und Kaisertitel*, pp. 27ff. He thus refutes Stengel’s view (*Kaisertitel und Souveränitätsidee*, pp. 19–23), who in turn refutes Drögereit (*Imperium und Imperator*, pp. 17–28).
- 84 See also n. 63 above. This title has been discussed by Stengel, *Imperium und Imperator*, pp. 38–45 and Drögereit, *Kaiseridee und Kaisertitel*, pp. 55f.
- 85 Also in Stengel, *Imperium und Imperator*, pp. 42f.
- 86 Stengel draws attention to the fact that there was a palpable Alcuinian influence at the Mercian court. Although Alcuin never refers to Offa or Coenwulf as *imperator* or to their realm as *imperium*, his political ideas touched upon Mercian hegemonial ideas (*Imperium und Imperator*, pp. 42–45).
- 87 S 392: ‘Edelstan rex Angulsexna and Norphymbra imperator . paganorum gubernator Brittanorumque propugnator’; S 406: ‘Athelstanus ipsius munificentia basileus Anglorum simul et imperator regum et nationum infra fines Britanniae commorantium.’ Sawyer argues that this title is more appropriate for charters after 946 (*Charters of Burton Abbey*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 2 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979], p. 8).
- 88 S 544 (AD 949), 548 (AD 949), 549 (AD 949), 550 (AD 949), 552a (AD 950), 569 (AD 955), 572 (AD 956 for 954 x 955), 633 (AD 956), 751 (AD 967), 775 (AD 970), 865 (AD 987), 869 (AD 988), 874 (AD 990), 886 (AD 995), 903 (AD 1002) and 931 (AD 1013) (all authentic, though some doubts persist for S 751 and 903).

- ⁸⁹ S 566 (AD 955/possibly authentic): 'Eadred cyning ⁊ casere totius Britannie Deo gratia.' It has been argued that this charter is an original serving as model for a later Latin translation rather than being a vernacular translation of a Latin original. See Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Peterborough Abbey*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 14 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 225–234 and further below.
- ⁹⁰ One could, however, argue that the Roman Empire did not embrace Anglo-Saxon England so there would be no actual conflict in using it. Indeed, as Stengel shows (*Imperium und Imperator*, pp. 28f), there was the notion that Britain did only belong to an *alter orbis* and was not included in the *orbis Romanorum*, which might have influenced the development of the title. Since the probability of this argument depends on the authenticity of Nennius' *Historia*, it remains on weak grounds.
- ⁹¹ From the fifth and sixth centuries onwards. See <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12426a.htm> (accessed May 2017).
- ⁹² S 342a (AD 871 x 899/spurious; authentic basis), 408 (AD 931/spurious) and 410 (AD 931/spurious).
- ⁹³ See Kleinschmidt for a discussion of the formal aspects of this formula (*Titulaturen englischer Könige*, pp. 108–110).
- ⁹⁴ Simon Keynes, 'The "Dunstan B" Charters', *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994), pp. 165–193, here p. 180.
- ⁹⁵ See, for example, the Old English account on *King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries* (EHD I no. 238).
- ⁹⁶ C&S no. 33: 'He cleansed holy places from all men's foulnesses, not only in the kingdom of the West Saxons, but in the land of the Mercians also. Assuredly, he drove out canons who abounded beyond measure in the aforesaid sins, and he established monks in the foremost places of all his dominion for the glorious service of the Saviour Christ. [. . .] With earnest scrutiny he began to investigate and inquire about the precepts of the holy rule, and wished to know the teaching of that same rule, by which is laid down the practice of a right life and honourable vocation, and the regulations which attract men to holy virtues' (trsl. EHD I no. 238). Cf. also ASC A 964.
- ⁹⁷ Cnut used this title twice (S 954 [AD 1009/forgery post-1066] and 967 [AD 1033/perhaps authentic]), Harthacnut once (S 993 [AD 1042/spurious]) and Edward the Confessor four times (S 1020 [AD 1050/suspicious], 1023 [AD 1052/suspicious], 1025 [AD 1054/spurious] and 1058 [AD 1044 x 1051/spurious]). Kleinschmidt also discusses the emergence of an ecclesiastical ruler image, focusing on Edgar, in connection with Æthelwold's *Regularis Concordia* and the refoundation charter of the New Minster Winchester S 745 (*Titulaturen englischer Könige*, pp. 120–129). See also below chapter 4.
- ⁹⁸ Classen, *Romanum Gubernans Imperium*, pp. 112f.
- ⁹⁹ Classen, *Romanum Gubernans Imperium*, p. 113.
- ¹⁰⁰ S 227 (forgery; authentic elements) and 351 (AD 939/spurious; authentic elements).
- ¹⁰¹ Kleinschmidt, *Titulaturen englischer Könige*, pp. 89–98.
- ¹⁰² S 429 (AD 935/authentic).
- ¹⁰³ On grecism in literature and charters, see Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Latin Literature 900–1066* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1993), pp. 105–149.
- ¹⁰⁴ For *curagulus*, see further below.
- ¹⁰⁵ Asser, ch. 98.
- ¹⁰⁶ That is, to sing 50 psalms and a mass every day for the king's soul. Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Shaftesbury Abbey*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 30–39.
- ¹⁰⁷ In Book 4, ch. 9 in a poem commemorating Edgar's coronation.
- ¹⁰⁸ Tentatively at least; Brooks et al. suggest the following arrangement to show the verses: 'Altitonantis dominus qui ex nihilo cuncta creavit/ cælum stellis composuit et sidere claro./ terram herbis vestivit et arbore multa;/ cuius ego Eadgar anax afflatus amore/ per consensum presulum procerumque meorum . . .' ('A New Charter of King Edgar', *Anglo-Saxon England* 13 [1984], pp. 137–155, here p. 147).

- ¹⁰⁹ S 615 (AD 956/authentic): 'Eadwig totius Albionis insulæ illustrissimus archons'; S 636 (AD 956/original): 'Eadwig numine cælesti gentis Geuuisorum orientaliumque nec non occidentalium simul etiam aquilonalium Saxonum archons'; S 638 (AD 956/pa): 'Eadwic tocius Britannicæ telluris archons'; S 725 (AD 964/possibly authentic): 'Eadgar totius Albionis insule archons' (in subscription); S 763 (AD 968/authentic): 'Eadgar tocius Bryttannicæ telluris archons'.
- ¹¹⁰ S 167 (AD 811), 192 (AD 840), 429 (AD 935), 481 (AD 942), 483 (AD 942), 496 (AD 944 for ? 942) and 617 (AD 956). All are authentic except for S 167, a forgery but with an authentic basis, and S 496, possibly authentic.
- ¹¹¹ Wulfstan, archbishop of York, uses this style almost exclusively when witnessing royal charters (see e.g. S 517 [AD 945/spurious], 525 [AD 947/authentic], 578 [AD 946 x 951/authentic]). The only other two archbishops to employ it, albeit it only once, are Oswald of York (S 799 [AD 974/spurious]), and Oda of Canterbury (S 562 [AD 953/authentic]).
- ¹¹² Aldhelm, *Carmen Rhythmica*, l. 33, and *Vita Sancti Dunstani*, dedication to Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury ('Perprudenti domino archonti Albrico').
- ¹¹³ Jan H. Hessels (ed.), *An Eighth Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary Preserved in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Ms. No. 144* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), section 1, l. 745 and 762, and Lowell Kindschi (ed.), *The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin-Moretus MS 32 and British Museum MS Additional 32, 246* (Stanford, CA: Univ. Diss., 1955), l. 173.
- ¹¹⁴ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 148. The reasons for using this term were twofold: it included several semantic levels and it never entered the imperial styles.
- ¹¹⁵ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 148.
- ¹¹⁶ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 149.
- ¹¹⁷ LL Capit. I, 31–43. See also Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, pp. 152–155 on the meaning of the title in the *Capitularies* from 742/744.
- ¹¹⁸ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 155.
- ¹¹⁹ S 28 (AD 762 or 763/ authentic): 'Eadbertus Dei dispensatione ab uniuersa prouincia Cantuariorum constitutus rex et princeps.'
- ¹²⁰ Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, and Minster-in-Thane*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 4 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 53f and 201.
- ¹²¹ Aldhelm, *De Virginitate (verse)*, l. 1038 ('princeps, imperium qui Romae rexerat amplum'); HE, I.4 ('usque in tempora Diocletiani principis').
- ¹²² *Carmen* 70 2.9 ('Et princeps Karolus vultu speculator aperto') and 3.7 ('Et princeps Karolus, sancto qui more benignus').
- ¹²³ James Campbell, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte: Hambledon, 1986), pp. 85f.
- ¹²⁴ Ep. 3 (trsl. EHD I no. 177).
- ¹²⁵ *Life of Wilfrid*, ch. 60: 'a chief man next in rank to the king'.
- ¹²⁶ S 33 (AD 761 x 764, probably 762 x 764/authentic).
- ¹²⁷ S 105 (AD 764/possibly authentic); Kelly, *St Augustine Charters*, 53.
- ¹²⁸ Book 4, ch. 2: 'and then the captains [of the barbarians] held the battlefield'.
- ¹²⁹ S 430 (AD 935/authentic): witness Ælfheah Wintoniensis æcclesiae previsor; *Vita Sancti Dunstani*: ch. 26 and 35.
- ¹³⁰ 'Æðelred totius Britannicæ nationis basileus aequa atque haereditaria sorte praelatus' (past participle of Lat. *Praeferre*).
- ¹³¹ See ch. 5 for a discussion on phrases denoting succession within royal styles.
- ¹³² The only ecclesiastical charter to contain this title is by Bishop Oswald of Worcester, S 1370 (AD 961 x 972 [? 969]/authentic).
- ¹³³ 'Eadgarus gentis Anglorum et barbarorum atque gentilium rex ac predux.'
- ¹³⁴ S 421 (AD 933/spurious), 423 (AD 933/forgery; authentic basis), S 692 (AD 961/authentic) and 740 (AD 966/possibly authentic).

- ¹³⁵ See further below for a discussion on this formula. It occurs only once in a fabricated charter by Edward the Elder, S 379 (AD 921/not authentic; authentic elements), with its formulas and witness list more appropriate for Athelstan's reign (c.931–934).
- ¹³⁶ Aldhelm, *De Virginitate (prose)*, ch. 43; HE I, 34; II, 12 and III, 2. The first instance refers to the Roman emperor Phocas and the last two to Edwin and Oswiu of Northumbria, to whom Bede assigns dominion over almost all Britain except Kent (II, 5).
- ¹³⁷ S 392 (AD 850 for 939 or 940), 548 (AD 949), 549 (AD 949), 550 (AD 949), 569 (AD 955), 572 (AD 956 for 954 x 955), 633 (AD 956) and 931 (AD 1013). All are authentic, except S 392 which is spurious but with authentic elements.
- ¹³⁸ E.g. Dungal Ep. 9, Pope Nicholas I Ep. 91, Pope Hadrian II Ep. 13, Pope John VIII Ep. 47, Peter Damian Ep. 40 and 61, and *Admont Letter Collection* Ep. 73 (Pope Alexander to Archbishop Eberhard I of Salzburg).
- ¹³⁹ 'Eadred succeeded to the kingdom [. . .] and the Scots swore oaths to him that they would agree to all that he wanted.'
- ¹⁴⁰ Even more so when considering that the earliest kings were constantly reminded of this duty.
- ¹⁴¹ S 429 (AD 935/authentic), 430 (AD 935/authentic), 438 (AD 937/authentic), 440 (AD 938/authentic), 446 (AD 939/authentic), 447 (AD 939/original), 449 (AD 939/original), 466 (940/possibly authentic) and 904 (AD 1002/possibly authentic).
- ¹⁴² William Stubbs (ed.), *Memorials of Saint Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury*. Rerum Britannicarum Medii Ævi Scriptores (London: Longman, 1874), Ep. 11 ('Auge potens speculans speculator gentis Anglorum/Assecla gregei Dunstane curagulae').
- ¹⁴³ *Orthodoxorum* charters are so called after the first word in the proem in the majority of texts. See Kelly, *Abingdon Charters I*, pp. lxxxiv–cxv. *Monarchus* can already be found in charters by Athelstan, e.g. S 416 (AD 931/authentic), 418 and 419 (both AD 932/authentic).
- ¹⁴⁴ Kindschi, *Latin–Old English Glossaries*, I. 196.
- ¹⁴⁵ 'miles Christi ut devicta tyrannorum acie monarcha terrae [. . .] factus est' (17).
- ¹⁴⁶ *Carmina Ecclesiastica*, 4.6.4: 'Thomas [. . .] /tangens [. . .] credidit extemplo salvantem saecula monarchum'; *De Virginitate (prose)*, ch. 40: 'monarchum mundi, rectorem poli, redemptorem soli archangelo pronuntiante'.
- ¹⁴⁷ *primus*: S 897 (AD 1000/spurious): "rex primus regali"; S 918 (AD 1008/suspicious): "primus Aþelredus rex"; *induperator*: S 914 (AD 1006 for 1002/spurious; authentic elements): "Æðelredus Anglorum induperator"; S 940 (AD 1006 x 1011/spurious): "Æthelredus tocius Britannice induperator insule", and *dominus*: S 712 (AD 963/authentic): "Eadgarus gratia Dei tocius Britannie telluris dominus."
- ¹⁴⁸ *Carmen*, 120 l. 7: 'Has tibi symphonias plectrat sophus, induperator [i.e. Charlemagne].'
- ¹⁴⁹ S 74 (AD 682/spurious), 98 (AD ?743 x 745/probably authentic), 126 (AD 786 or 589 for ?789 x 790/ perhaps authentic), 313 (AD 854/spurious), 325 (AD 854/spurious), 333 (AD 864/probably authentic), 342 (AD ?869 or 879/authentic), 357 (AD 871 x 877/ spurious; authentic elements), 391 (AD 843 for 934/ suspicious), 427 (AD 934/authentic basis), 451 (AD 925 for 927 x 939/ not authentic), 457 (AD 927 x 939/spurious), 566 (AD 955/authentic), 779 (AD 970/perhaps authentic), 806 (AD 978 for ?968/authentic basis), 813 (AD ?970 x 975/authentic basis), 817 (AD 963 x 975/authentic), 914 (AD 1006 for 1002/spurious; authentic basis), 939 (AD 995 x 999/original).
- ¹⁵⁰ *Dictionary of Old English website*: <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca/> (accessed May 2017).
- ¹⁵¹ *Ælfric Grammar*: 'The king is called a *regendo*, that is from governance, because the king shall guide his people with great wisdom and guard them with might. [. . .] I now call *rex* king, that is he who humbly guides his people. If he however oppresses them with his rule, then he is a *tyrannus*, that is [being] cruel or savage' (trsl. KMcC.).
- ¹⁵² Kelly, *Peterborough Charters*, no. 11: 'He [God] has endowed with the kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons Eadred, king and emperor of the whole of Britain, thanks to God[.]' (p. 227).
- ¹⁵³ See the discussion of the charter in Kelly, *Peterborough Charters*, pp. 225–234.
- ¹⁵⁴ Kelly, *Peterborough Charters*, p. 228.

- ¹⁵⁵ *Feria VI in quarta ebdomada Quadragesimae*: ‘on þam time wæron caseres on Rome swa þæt heo acton ða anweald and cynedom ofer alne middaneard and ofer alle kyngæs æfter Cristes acennednyse’. Cf. the entry for *casere* in the Dictionary of Old English corpus which yields 819 results (access May 2017).
- ¹⁵⁶ I.3: ‘fram þam ylcan casere Claudie wæs sended Uespasianus on Breotone, se æfter Nerone ricsode.’
- ¹⁵⁷ ‘And that same year Odda, emperor of the Romans, went to the land of the Greeks, and he then encountered a great army of Saracens [. . .] and then the emperor fought against them. [. . .] He was called Odda and was the son of the prince Leodulf, and this Leodulf was the son of the old Odda and of King Edward’s daughter [Edith]’ (trsl. EHD I, no.1, 232).
- ¹⁵⁸ Matt 22.21: *reddite ergo quae sunt caesari et quae sunt dei* forgeldas forðon ða ðe sint ðæs cæseres ðæm casari & ða ðe aron Godes Gode. (*The Lindisfarne Gospels* [Mt.] ed. Skeat, *Four Gospels*, 25–245).
- ¹⁵⁹ *Phoenix*, l. 632: ðus reordiað ryhtfremmente, manes amerede, in þære mæran byrig; cyneþrym cypað, caseres lof singað on swegle soðfæstra gedryht. *Lord’s Prayer II*, l. 59: þu gewurðod eart on heofonrice, heah casere, and on eorðan, ealra cyninga help and heafod, halig læce, re ðe and rihtwis, rumheort hlaforð.
- ¹⁶⁰ Susan E. Kelly and Nicholas Brooks (eds.), *Charters of Christ Church Canterbury*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 17 and 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 18 no. 140 (S 914): ‘I, Æthelred, by God’s grace king and ruler of the English and of the other islands that are situated around’ (cf. also pp. 1019–1033).
- ¹⁶¹ See Agnes J. Robertson (ed. and trsl.), *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956, 2nd ed.), pp. 304–7.
- ¹⁶² Higham (An *English Empire. Bede and the Early Anglo-Saxon Kings* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995], pp. 47–73) interprets the passage in HE, II.5 as Bede’s concerted effort to endow Æthelberht of Kent with the dominion that Pope Gregory assumes he actually has. While Bede was restricted in his selection of the kings, he was rather free to assign to them any extent of territory, as long as it was not more than Æthelberht’s. This attempt fits well into the agenda of promoting Æthelberht as first Christian king over all Anglo-Saxon England.
- ¹⁶³ S 427 (AD 934) is to my knowledge the only charter that contains this title in the Old English version: ‘ÆDELSTAN Ongolsaxna cyning and brytenwalda ealles þyses iglandæs’.
- ¹⁶⁴ Barbara Yorke takes it to mean ‘wide/powerful’ ruler only (‘The Vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon Overlordship’, p. 172, in David Brown, James Campbell and Sonia Chadwick Hawkes [eds.], *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*. BAR British Series 92 [Oxford: BAR, 1981], pp. 171–200). Fanning argues for a shift in meaning from ‘Britain-ruler’ to ‘broad ruler’ but, due to its single occurrence only, he attributes a very limited political value to this term (‘Bede, *Imperium*, and the *Bretwaldas*’, *Speculum* 66 [1991], pp. 1–26, here pp. 22f).
- ¹⁶⁵ Wormald, ‘Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*’, pp. 106f, in Patrick Wormald (ed.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 99–129.
- ¹⁶⁶ See the detailed discussion in Hannah Vollrath-Reichelt, *Königsgedanke und Königtum bei den Angelsachsen bis zur Mitte des 9. Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Böhlau, 1971), pp. 79–121. James also suggests that a royal title without its ethnic qualification implies a more imperial and all-embracing rule (‘The Origins of Barbarian Kingdoms: the Continental Evidence Origins of Barbarian Kingdoms’, p. 45, in Steven Bassett [ed.], *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms. Studies in the Early History of Britain* [Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989], pp. 40–52).
- ¹⁶⁷ Yorke, *Anglo-Saxon Overlordship*, pp. 183f.
- ¹⁶⁸ Bresslau, *Handbuch I*, p. 47: ‘[eine Formel,] die dem Gedanken Ausdruck verleiht, daß der Aussteller seine irdische Sendung der Gnade Gottes verdanke’. The biblical reference is 1 Cor. 15.10: ‘Gratia autem Dei sum id quod sum, et gratia ejus in me vacua non fuit, sed abundantius illis omnibus laboravi: non ego autem, sed gratia Dei mecum[.]’ (‘But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And his grace in me has not been void: but I have laboured more abundantly than all they. Yet not I, but the grace of God with me[.]’)

- ¹⁶⁹ Fichtenau, 'Zur Geschichte der Invokationen und „Devotionsformeln“', p. 50, in Heinrich Fichtenau, *Beiträge zur Mediävistik. Ausgewählte Aufsätze Vol. 2* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1977), pp. 37–61.
- ¹⁷⁰ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 215.
- ¹⁷¹ Fichtenau, *Geschichte der Invokationen*, p. 51.
- ¹⁷² Fichtenau, *Geschichte der Invokationen*, pp. 52f. Cf. also Scharer, *Intitulaciones der angelsächsischen Könige*, p. 51. See the section on episcopal use of the *gratia Dei*-formula below.
- ¹⁷³ Fichtenau, *Geschichte der Invokationen*, p. 55.
- ¹⁷⁴ Merta, 'Politische Theorie in den Königsurkunden Pippins I', *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Instituts für Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992), pp. 117–131, here p. 125.
- ¹⁷⁵ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, pp. 213–217.
- ¹⁷⁶ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, pp. 66–73.
- ¹⁷⁷ Wolfram, *Intitulatio II*, p. 16.
- ¹⁷⁸ e.g. S 5 (AD 604 x 616/fabrication; authentic elements), S 70 (AD 671 for ? 679/authentic basis), S 228 (AD 671/forgery; authentic basis), 229 (AD ?/spurious), 230 (AD 680 for ? 685/spurious), 231 (AD ?682 for 688/perhaps authentic; authentic basis), 232 (AD 673 for ? 683/spurious), 233 (AD 687/not authentic; authentic basis) and 234 (AD 688/perhaps authentic; authentic basis).
- ¹⁷⁹ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 215. See further below.
- ¹⁸⁰ See Table 2 in the Appendix for the frequency of legitimization formulas in charters.
- ¹⁸¹ I exclude the single occurrences. The tenth-century variants are: *Dei nutu*, *Dei ammiculante*, *Dei opitulante*, *Dei providentia*, *Dei dispositione*, *omnipotentis dexteram*, *omnitonantis dexteram*, *Christo conferente*, *omnipatrantis dexteram* and *divina indulgente*.
- ¹⁸² One would suspect that these two formulas would be particularly applicable in cases of disputed successions. There are, for example, two charters by Æthelred (S 886 [AD 995/authentic] and 891 [AD 997/authentic]) which use *Dei providentia*, but there are too late to be linked to his own disputed succession in 978. Ultimately, however, every political instance in a reign can be seen as being divinely predestined.
- ¹⁸³ Thus, they will be discussed in chapter 5.
- ¹⁸⁴ See e.g. Marcel Mauss' classical study *The Gift (The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Trsl. W.D. Halls [New York and London: Norton, 2000]). This brings to mind Ælfric's statement that once a ruler has been chosen, his yoke cannot be shaken from the people's neck. Cf. CHom I.14
- ¹⁸⁵ Only eight charters refer to merit: S 92 (AD 749/authentic), 96 (AD 757/possibly authentic), 97 (AD 716 x 717/authentic), 114 (AD 779/possibly original), 226 (AD ?/forgery; authentic elements), 320 (AD ? 880 for 855/forgery; authentic elements), 369 (AD 903/authentic) and 402 (AD 929/spurious).
- ¹⁸⁶ Tentatively at least. The extant amount of surviving charters does not allow for definite conclusions. Although Christianity was first established in Kent, Kentish rulers did not employ the formula at all (except for one instance in Æthelberht's charters). It was most consistently used from a relatively early date onwards (end of seventh/early eighth centuries) in the charters of the Mercian rulers, and due to their overlordship in the Hwicce charters. Even the Wessex rulers were not consistent in employing the formula.
- ¹⁸⁷ Franz Dölger, 'Die Kaiserurkunde der Byzantiner als Ausdruck ihrer politischen Anschauungen', *Historische Zeitschrift* 159 (1939), pp. 229–250.
- ¹⁸⁸ Dölger, *Kaiserurkunde*, p. 233. The propagation of rulership in certain ceremonies and rituals as well as in works of art will be discussed in chapter 5.
- ¹⁸⁹ Fichtenau, 'Monarchische Propaganda in Urkunden', p. 32, in Fichtenau, *Beiträge zur Mediävistik*, pp. 18–36.
- ¹⁹⁰ Fichtenau, *Monarchische Propaganda*, p. 33.
- ¹⁹¹ Fichtenau, *Monarchische Propaganda*, p. 32.
- ¹⁹² Keynes, *Diplomas*, ch. 4.
- ¹⁹³ See Kleinschmidt, *Titulaturen englischer Könige*, pp. 120ff.
- ¹⁹⁴ Wolfram, *Intitulatio II*, pp. 59f.

- ¹⁹⁵ Wolfram, *Intitulatio I*, p. 214. This is especially obvious in Edmund's charters from 940, the year after his accession. In this year, his charters include the legitimization formula eleven times, in six of these the formula is derived from Athelstan's charters ('ego . . . desiderio regni celestis exardens, fauente superno numine basileos industrius Anglorum ceterarumque gentium in circuitu persistentium'). See S 460 (AD 940/authentic), 461 (AD 940/authentic), 462 (AD 940/authentic), 463 (AD 940/authentic), 469 (AD 940/authentic), 470 (AD 940/original) and compare with S 414 (AD 931/fabrication; authentic elements), 415 (AD 931/forgery; authentic basis), 440 (AD 938/authentic), 441 (AD 938/authentic), 442 (AD 938/a?), 445 (AD 938/perhaps authentic).
- ¹⁹⁶ While I limit myself here to the legitimization formula, the same observation is true of the functional title, although here kings had far fewer options in choosing their occupational title.
- ¹⁹⁷ Scharer, *Königsurkunde*, and Heather Edwards, *The Charters of the Early West Saxon Kingdom*. BAR British Series 198 (Oxford: BAR, 1988).
- ¹⁹⁸ Scharer, *Königsurkunde*, pp. 217f.
- ¹⁹⁹ Scharer, *Königsurkunde*, p. 278.
- ²⁰⁰ The Christian legitimization of Æthelbald, for example, was enforced by the Church to create a marked contrast to his predecessor Ceolred, who was regarded as enemy of the Church. See Scharer, *Intitulationes der angelsächsischen Könige*, p. 51.
- ²⁰¹ I have excluded the five charters from Edward the Martyr's reign as well as those that could not be precisely dated to a certain year. I have listed only historical information that would have had an impact on royal politics. Thus, deaths of bishops or appearances of comets have been excluded.
- ²⁰² Eadwig, for example, expels St Dunstan, divorces his wife and the kingdom was split into two parts during his reign.
- ²⁰³ It is interesting, however, that the Anglo-Saxon charters do not contain any legitimization formulas that explicitly refer to a reconciliation with God, as for example the Carolingian charters do ('divina repropitiante clementia'; Louis the Pious 834). On the other hand, no Anglo-Saxon king was forced to abdicate by all his people like Louis the Pious. See Wolfram, 'Lateinische Herrschertitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert', pp. 64 and 72, in Wolfram, *Intitulatio II*, 19–177.
- ²⁰⁴ HE, I.10, 17 & 21; II.19. See also the *Greater Chronicle* s.a. 4362 and 4410.
- ²⁰⁵ Fichtenau, *Geschichte der Invokationen*, p. 54.
- ²⁰⁶ According to Wolfram, the transfer of the legitimization formula from the episcopal to the royal charter first took place in Anglo-Saxon England (*Intitulatio I*, p. 215).
- ²⁰⁷ The sixty-eight charters are: S 2 (605); 3 (605); 6 (618); 7 (675); 9 (686); 10 (689); 13 (690); 18 (697); 22 (696 x 716); 24 (751 for 750); 27 (738); 30 (762 for 747); 34 (765); 37 (765 x 785); 39 (805); 41 (805 x 807); 51 (676); 55 (757); 57 (756 for 777 x 779); 59 (770); 60 (770); 71 (680/681); 73 (681); 75 (692); 92 (749); 106 (764 for 767); 108 (772); 109 (772); 113 (778); 114 (779); 123 (785); 125 (786); 127 (787); 128 (788); 129 (788); 130 (789); 131 (789); 141 (768 x 779); 147 (777 x 779); 160 (804); 164 (809); 168 (811); 169 (812); 170 (812); 178 (815); 187 (823); 188 (831); 200 (851); 209 (862); 258 (749); 259 (749); 265 (808 for 757 x 758); 270 (773 for 833); 270a (801); 281 (838); 282 (845 for 830); 287 (839); 292 (842); 293 (843); 316 (855 for 853); 323 (833 x 858); 332 (863); 338 (867); 395 (925); 515 (946); 701 (962); 788 (972); 886 (995).
- ²⁰⁸ Scharer, *Intitulationes der angelsächsischen Könige*, p. 65.
- ²⁰⁹ As *episcopus* in S 123 (AD 785/possibly original), 125 (AD 786/fabrication; authentic elements), 128 (AD 788/original); as archbishop in S 129 (AD 788/possibly authentic), 130 (AD 789/authentic) and 131 (AD 789/authentic).
- ²¹⁰ S 106 (AD 764 for 767/authentic), 109 (AD ? 772 for 775 or 777/authentic), 113 (AD 778/perhaps authentic; authentic elements), 114 (AD 779/possibly original), 141 (AD 777 x 792/not authentic; authentic basis) and 147 (AD 777 x 779/forgery; authentic elements). S 106 is a non-Kentish charter, attested by Jænberht; the bishop in the other five is Eadberht of Leicester.
- ²¹¹ S 55 (AD 757/forgery; authentic elements), 57 (AD 756 for 777 x 779/perhaps authentic; authentic basis and elements), 59 (AD 770/perhaps authentic), 60 (AD 770/spurious), 164 (AD 809/authentic), 170 (AD 812/authentic), 188 (AD 831/original), 209 (AD 862/suspicious), 270 (AD 773 for 833/fabrication; authentic basis), 281 (AD 838/authentic basis), 287 (AD 839/perhaps

authentic), 292 (AD 842/authentic), 293 (AD 843/authentic), 323 (AD 833 x 839/authentic), 338 (AD 867/original), 395 (AD 924/authentic), 788 (AD 972/spurious; authentic basis) and 886 (AD 995/authentic).

²¹² See Nicholas Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1984), pp. 132–142, for the contentions between Wulfred and Coenwulf.

²¹³ One cannot be more precise than that since the amount of extant episcopal charters is rather low in comparison to the royal ones. A deeper analysis of the Anglo-Saxon episcopal charters is still a desideratum, as stated by Julia Barrow, ‘From the Lease to the Certificate: the Evolution of Episcopal Acta in England and Wales (c.700–c.1250)’, in Christoph Haidacher and Werner Köfler (eds.), *Die Diplomatik der Bischofsurkunde vor 1250* (Innsbruck: Tiroler Landesarchiv, 1995), pp. 529–542.

²¹⁴ Fichtenau, *Geschichte der Invokationen*, p. 51.

²¹⁵ Wolfram, *Political Theory*, p. 39.

²¹⁶ Wolfram, *Lateinische Herrschertitel*, p. 77.

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The Anglo-Saxon *Regina Gratia Dei**

In the overall discussion of kingship and authority, of finding the right balance between secular and religious powers, queens are conspicuous for their absence and for their comparative weakness in the all-male power-plays. The sources are usually silent on women, except with regard to exceptional females that stand out because of their assumption of traditionally male roles, masculine character traits, very unwomanly behaviour or superior (and hence saintly) conduct. The average Anglo-Saxon woman, however, remains hidden behind her outstanding sisters. Scholars such as Pauline Stafford, Sarah Foot, Clare Lees, Gillian Overing, Jane Chance, Stacy Klein, Janet Nelson and Elizabeth Tyler have set themselves the task of making these women visible, and due to their efforts the role of the Anglo-Saxon woman, and the queen in particular, is becoming better understood.¹ Such investigations enable us to set queenship in relation to kingship, contextualising queens' powers and abilities either in contrast or in parallel to their respective kings. While queens might be seen as adjuncts or complements to kings, they could be powerful in their own right and also shrewd enough to manipulate prevalent circumstances for their own ends. Old English poetry speaks of women as peace-weavers, but also as heroines, while non-poetic texts speak of women as regent mothers and widows under the protection of the king. Combining these sources allows us to trace the emergence of a particular type of queen, one that shares in the divine ministry of her husband, the Anglo-Saxon *regina gratia Dei* instead of merely being the king's wife. The crucial difference, however, is that whereas kings 'inherited' authority from their predecessors on the throne, the power of queens was inextricably linked to their person so that each queen had to strive anew for her share of royal *potestas*.

Despite the appearance of women having been of only marginal importance, the extant corpus of Anglo-Saxon laws reveals royal concern for the protection of women, lay as well as nuns.² Legislation predominantly focused on establishing security for women and their children, especially in cases of the death of the husband, and the laws also include severe punishments for those who violate women. Interestingly, women are not held accountable for the deeds of their husbands: laws by Wihtried, Ine and Cnut strictly differentiate between a wife's knowledge or ignorance of her husband's crimes and proscribe punishment accordingly.³ The growing efforts of the Church to regulate marriage is evinced by the law code *Wifmannes Bewedding* and the extant marriage agreements.⁴

While these, in particular, appear to reduce marriage to a business transaction in which both women and dowry are objects to be exchanged, they are also proof of the need to protect the institution of marriage and to ensure the welfare of the woman involved once she leaves her kin.⁵ The Anglo-Saxon woman, as she emerges from the laws, appears as almost the equal of a man. Although the laws focus predominantly on monetary compensation in cases of violence against women and on the continuous insurance of women's welfare, they also reveal that women were always on the legislator's mind and not at all invisible.

Queenly Behaviour

The Anglo-Saxon ideal woman arises out of poetic and fictional texts. According to *Maxims I*, for example, she ought to occupy herself with embroidery rather than gossip, especially as the latter results in fading reputation and beauty (ll. 63b–65). She needs to be obedient to her husband, to comfort and clean him when he arrives home from his sea voyages and to remain faithful to him in his absences (ll. 93–102). As wife of a lord, she is at the heart of the retinue:

ond wif geþeon

leof mid hyre leodum, leohtmod wesan,
 rune healdan, rumheort beon
 mearum ond maþmum, meodorædenne
 for gesiðmægen symle æghwær
 eodor æþelinga ærest gegretan,
 forman fulle to frean hond
 ricene geræcan, ond him ræd witan
 boldagendum bæm ætsomne.⁶

Similar scenes are depicted in *Beowulf*, where Wealhtheow proffers the mead-filled cup to Hrothgar's retainers (ll. 611–628a). The political dimension of the lady with the mead-cup rests in her ability to balance her husband's words, easing quarrels and maintaining hierarchies among the warriors.⁷ The story of another queen in the poem exemplifies bad royal behaviour and how the marriage to a king changed her until she eventually behaved according to queenly norms (ll. 1931b–1962). Yet the most prominent role for queens in poetry is that of peace-weaver. As her name suggests, Wealhtheow herself probably came to Hrothgar's court to forge an alliance between the Danes and the Helmings (l. 620).⁸ The most famous and arguably most tragic peace-weaver is their daughter Freawaru, who is given as bride to Ingeld to end the feud between Danes and Heathobards. As *Beowulf* relates, no matter how worthy the bride, some quarrels cannot be appeased by the gift of a woman (ll. 2016b–2069a).⁹ Outside poetry, Ælfric's *Esther*, for example, reveals the growing importance of queens as royal counsellors, a function that was enhanced through the changing concept, and increasing significance, of queenship.¹⁰ Taken together, such examples work like mirrors for princesses, designed to offer advice on how to behave in a role that was left largely undefined (and unrefined) in Anglo-Saxon society.

Practical advice on correct queenly behaviour outside poetry can only be found in continental sources. Sedulius Scottus, for example, states that as much as a good wife is a blessing to her husband and much enhances and adorns the glory of him, a bad wife 'is the ruin of the household, the exhaustion of wealth, the fullness of crimes, and the abode of all evils and vices'.¹¹ A ruler's wife, therefore, should be 'noble, beautiful, and wealthy but also chaste, prudent, and compliant in holy virtues'.¹² The queen is depicted as the complement to the king with regard not only to her character, but also to her roles and duties:

[I]ta e contrario casta et prudens mulier utilibus rebus disciplinabiliter intendens humili facie hilarique sermone pacifice liberos et familiam regit, proque viri salute, si necesse fuerit, suam animam opponit morti ac divitias, quae sunt mariti sui, cum bona fama custodit. [. . .] Fit ergo ipsa divitiarum deductio et domus confirmatio, viri iocunditas, familiae pulchritudo omniumque virtutum connexio. Talem autem decet [. . .] pietatis et sanctae conversationis semper ostendere formam ac prudentium consiliorum esse repertricem.¹³

Together, king and queen form the model ruling couple whom the subjects should look up to and whose behaviour they should imitate.

In everyday courtly business, the queen, together with the chamberlain, is responsible for the furnishing of the court, the royal jewels, the *dona annualia/annua* and the management of the ambassadorial gifts.¹⁴ While this counsel is directed towards the Carolingian queens, similar conventions apply in the Anglo-Saxon court. Cnut's laws, for example, reveal that women were responsible for the contents of storeroom, chest and cupboard, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* relates accounts of queens absconding with the royal treasure.¹⁵ Queens thus served important functions at court that often went unacknowledged in the sources. In fact, queens-to-be appear more often as movable goods, fostering alliances between hostile kings, than as valuable persons in their own right. Only in later Anglo-Saxon times has queenship evolved to such an extent that one can speak of a separate female authority. This rise in importance is strongly connected to the establishment of Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England and the tenth-century Benedictine Reform movement.

Throneworthy Queens

The status of queens before the Conversion remains hidden; the only information on pagan princesses comes from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in which he relates that the Irish gave some of their women to the Picts on condition of instituting matrilineal descent in dynastic successions (HE, I.1). The first queen of some importance is Bertha, the Frankish wife of the Kentish king Æthelberht, who, although herself Christian, did not manage to impart her faith onto her husband and his people (HE, I.25). While Bede himself neglects the role of women in the Conversion, several popes thought their influence necessary: Pope Boniface, for example, sends a veiled rebuke to Queen Æthelburh, wife of Edwin of Northumbria, admonishing her to increase her efforts in converting her husband (HE, II.11). Bede's emphasis in his writings is on the Augustine mission and hence he downplays the influence of these early Christian queens over their husbands.¹⁶

For him, women were far more important in another function: that of women wedded to Christ.

Kings used their daughters to 'barter' with God. If God would grant victory or perform a miracle, pagan kings offered both their own conversion and that of their people; they would also often dedicate their daughter as nun. While this may read as being somewhat superficial, the daughter in question actually served several important functions: she was acknowledgment of the existence of God; she embodied the royal promise to convert (thus, by extension, also embodying the newly acquired faith of her people); and, most importantly, she established a lasting relationship between the royal house and Christ. These daughters are the peace-weavers of the Conversion: their dedication to the religious life is an expression of weaving peace with God and, as nuns, they forge alliances between king and clergy.¹⁷ Thus, Bede's neglect of the impact of queens on the Conversion can be seen in another light. By moving away from this function, Bede also moves away 'from the idea that the early kings' investment in and adherence to Christianity were solely a function of secular bargains designed to procure wealth, military victory, and temporal glory – everything that royal women represented as accessible through dynastic connections'.¹⁸ Dedicating a daughter as nun had many consequences since it would be one daughter less to forge alliances and establish relationships with other dynasties. Yet, over time, royal daughters became royal abbesses of important monasteries and would thus serve their dynasty in a new way.¹⁹ Since that was a development not yet conceivable for the early convert kings, the sacrifice of a child to a new, and also unknown, religion was considerable.

Bede's inclination to downplay the impact royal women had on early Anglo-Saxon society and on the emergence and establishment of Christianity becomes understandable in the light of the prevalent ambivalence towards women in general. Patristic writers like St Augustine of Hippo were misogynist in their attitudes, and although women were among the most fervent supporters of the new faith, they were nevertheless regarded as responsible for man's fall and thus as hindrance on the road to mankind's salvation.²⁰ Within the biblical framework and Christian tradition, women had to find suitable roles for themselves and the Church had to provide role models. Thus, apart from being wives and mothers, women became Eves, Marys, Jezebels, Esthers, Judiths, Helenas and so on – exemplars drawn from the Bible. In the early Middle Ages, these roles were still relatively new, and writers like Bede and later Ælfric found it difficult to align contemporary women with biblical females. The ambiguity that surrounded the status and functions of women became especially apparent with regard to the queen. Her primary function was to bear offspring so that the dynasty would be continued; only secondarily was she a political person. The focus on her suitability as queen and mother to a king's son(s) was closely linked to issues of legitimacy. The earliest document to proclaim legitimacy as essential for kingship is the Legate's report of 786:

Ut in ordinatione regum nullus permittat pravorum prævalere assensum: sed legitime reges a sacerdotibus et senioribus populi eligantur, et non de adulterio vel incoestu procreati: quia sicut nostris temporibus ad sacerdotium secundum canones adulter pervenire non potest; sic nec christus Domini esse valet, et rex totius regni, et hæres patriæ, qui ex legitimo non fuerit connubio generatus[.]²¹

From what Bede tells us, most wives of kings were royal princesses and thus fully legitimate, but the emphasis on royal legitimacy in the report also reveals that men ascended royal thrones who did not derive from royal marriages. Thus, at least from the last decades of the eighth century, the status of queens changed towards a greater emphasis of their throneworthiness.

The first queen to express that changed status is Cynethryth, wife of Offa of Mercia. It is probable that she came from a surviving branch of Penda's dynasty, and Offa deliberately married her to connect himself to an older Mercian family and thereby enhance his own status.²² She is the first queen to make regular appearances as witness in her husband's charters and she is also the only one whose royal style includes a legitimization formula.²³ This is thus the only instance of a queen participating in her husband's divine ministry. Her elevated status is, however, not the result of her origins or of a newly evolved understanding of queenship. Instead, it must be seen within the context of Offa's efforts first, to elevate his own dynasty above all other Anglo-Saxon ones, and second, to control the Anglo-Saxon episcopate in general and the archbishop of Canterbury in particular. Like Charlemagne, Offa had his son Ecgrith consecrated during his own lifetime, a move that necessitated the creation of a separate archbishopric in Lichfield which in turn offered Offa an obedient archbishop. Likewise, the coin struck for Cynethryth, which is unparalleled in English coinage, is evidence of Offa's imperial ambitions. These coins were all minted by a single moneyer, Eoba, and bear her title *regina* inscribed around an *M* and with the same bust as Offa's – although some of them have an additional headdress to indicate the queen.²⁴ Offa might have ordered these coins to be struck in a desire to imitate the Roman model, where emperors frequently struck coins in the names of their wives or other family members.²⁵ The only contemporary model is that of the Byzantine Empress Irene (780–802), who appears on coins of her son Constantine IV, but whether or not Offa knew of this model remains open to speculation.²⁶ It might also be that these coins were issued purely for honorific reasons and/or as another means for Offa to display the superior dignity of the Mercian royal dynasty. This coinage could also have been intended to generate a separate income for the queen, or as a reflection of Offa's ongoing struggle with the archbishops of Canterbury, the usurpation and transfer of ecclesiastical minting rights.²⁷ Thus, while Offa's imperial ambitions led to the implementation of some continental customs, they inadvertently also elevated the status of his wife and also of subsequent queens. Although this elevation was bound to her person only, the status of Mercian royal wives in general was changed. Her successor Ælfthryth, the wife of Coenwulf of Mercia, also regularly subscribes to her husband's charters, continuing a custom begun by Offa and Cynethryth. Furthermore, from Cynethryth onwards, the maternal aspects of a queen's power were pushed to the fore.²⁸ Queens bestowed legitimacy through their role as mothers of future kings, which would have an impact on later dynastic struggles and succession quarrels.

Ninth-century Mercian queens, in particular, were powerful women against whom the Wessex wives fade and pale. Indeed, '[t]o marry into the West Saxon ruling family in the ninth century was to sink into obscurity, yet outside Wessex its women could achieve the height of fame and power'.²⁹ The reasons for this obscurity are known through Asser, who reports that because of the bad example given by a Mercian (!) princess and subsequent Wessex queen, Wessex kings were reluctant to give their wives any royal denomination, let alone status.³⁰ Thus, when Æthelwulf of Wessex returned from Rome

and married Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, in 856, the Frankish king ensured that his daughter would have some protection bestowed through royal consecration. As the example of tenth-century royal wives shows, being a royal wife did not necessarily lead to a secure position. Indeed, serial monogamists like Edward the Elder and Edgar repudiated their wives regularly when political or personal circumstances changed. While most of these wives were endowed with a nunnery to live out their life comfortably, some disappeared from the records. It is such a fate that Charles the Bald tried to prevent with his daughter's consecration. While Hincmar of Rheims, who composed the *Judith ordo*, acknowledged that there was no biblical precedent for the consecration of queens, Frankish history provided some instances: Pippin III's wife, Bertrada, was consecrated with her sons and husband in 754 by Pope Stephen II, Charlemagne's wife, Fastrada, might have been consecrated in 783, Louis the Pious' first wife, Ermengard, was crowned in 816 and his second, Judith, in 819.³¹ This custom was hence not unknown to the Franks, yet the ritual had to be adapted to make it valid in Wessex. According to the *Annals of St Bertin*:

Edilwulf, rex occidentalium Anglorum, Roma rediens, Judith, filiam Karli regis, mense Iulio desponsatam Kalendis Octobribus in Vermeria palatio in matrimonium accipit, et eam, Ingmaro Durocortori Remorum episcopo benedicente, imposito capiti eius diademate reginae nomine insignit, quod sibi suaque genti eatenus fuerat insuetum: patratoque regis apparatibus utrimque atque muneribus matrimonio, cum ea Britanniam, regni sui ditionem, navigio repetit.³²

The interesting detail here is that Archbishop Hincmar consecrates Judith, but King Æthelwulf crowns her. Crowning thus depends on prior consecration, and it is significant that it is the Wessex king who conducts this part of the ritual. The bestowal of the crown by either Hincmar or Charles could be interpreted as typical Frankish custom and hence invalid in Wessex. However, placing the crown on Judith's head changed her status, which was then acknowledged by Æthelwulf. Through the creation of a precedent, that is the consecration and coronation of a (West Saxon) royal wife, a valid ritual was established which the West Saxons would be bound to honour. Furthermore, it was essential that this happened while still in France, thus ensuring doubly the validity of the ritual and royal title.³³ The legitimacy of this new status is further evinced when, upon the death of Æthelwulf, his son Æthelbald took over kingdom and queen.³⁴ It was not unusual for kings to marry their predecessor's wife, yet it was described as abominable when it was a son who took over his father's widow. Asser offers no further clarification of why Æthelbald married her, nor does the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. A possible reason might lie in the events of 855/856: as Asser reports, Æthelbald and Ealhstan, bishop of Sherborne, plotted together to take over the kingdom but were unsuccessful, and to prevent civil strife, Æthelwulf divided the kingdom, keeping the Eastern part for himself and assigning the Western part to his son.³⁵ These events were still recent when Æthelwulf died two years later and many West Saxon nobles might not have forgotten the son's revolt. Thus, marrying Judith, a consecrated queen, could have been a further means for Æthelbald to enhance his own throneworthiness. On the other hand, it would also ensure Judith's own status as queen if she married the next king: in a foreign country this might have been her only option for protection.³⁶

Queenly Power

At the end of the ninth century a woman emerges, as powerful as kings, who could have borne the title of queen were it not for the demotion of her husband's lands to an earldom. Æthelflæd, daughter of Alfred the Great, married Æthelred who probably succeeded Ceolwulf as king of the Mercians in 879, but had acknowledged Alfred's overlordship from at least 883, since in his earliest surviving charter from that year he is already styled *ealdorman* and subscribes as *dux* (S 218).³⁷ According to Pauline Stafford, this alliance served West Saxon and Mercian political ends: for Wessex, the connection with Mercia produced a united force against the Viking invaders; for Mercia, and Æthelred in particular, this marriage served to legitimise his claims to Mercian rulership since Æthelflæd's mother was a noble Mercian herself.³⁸ It is a curious fact that the *Mercian Register*, although copied incompletely,³⁹ never mentions Æthelred, except in the annal recording his death (911), but lavishes praise on his wife. Even the main *Chronicle* refers to him only three times: under the annal of 886, when Alfred recaptured London and placed it under Æthelred's rule; in 893, when a great army was assembled; and in 910/911 to record his death. In contrast, Æthelflæd appears in almost all the annals of the *Mercian Register* from 910 to 918, except for 911. These entries depict her as an able ruler, fortifying her realm with boroughs, commanding and leading armies. Her abilities as female ruler are summed up by the chronicler when recording her death:

Ac swiðe hrædlice þæs ðe hi þæs geworden hæfde, heo gefor *xii* nihtun ær middan sumera binnan Tamaweorþige ðy eahtoþan geare þæs ðe heo Myrcna anweald mid riht hlaforddome healdende wæs[.]⁴⁰

Other entries refer to her actions as being undertaken with the help of God ('mid Godes fultume', AD 918 and 'Gode fultumgendum', AD 917) or with God's permission or indulgence ('Gode forgyfendum', AD 913). Her rulership as God-given ministry is hence acknowledged, but also legitimised. Of the nine charters issued during Æthelred and Æthelflæd's reign, seven employ the *gratia Dei* formula.⁴¹ Two of these nine were issued by Æthelflæd only; in S 224, she is styled *domina*, and in S 225 her rulership is paraphrased in an elaborate legitimation formula instead of a title ('Æþelfled, iuuante superna pietate et largiente clementia Christi gubernacula regens Merciorum'). Indeed, the scribe took great care to avoid the title of queen, and the tangential style suggests a certain degree of subordination to an overlord.⁴² Although the impression of Æthelflæd's rulership as conveyed by the diplomas retreats behind the lordship of her husband, she is more prominent in all other sources. Æthelflæd emerges out of the obscurity of Wessex wives by achieving royal power. In comparison to the queens before and after, Æthelflæd's rulership is unique in that she ruled for some time without a male partner and without being the regent for an underage future king. This certainly originates at least in part in the progress made from Cynethryth onwards with regard to female power, yet it also shows in how far female *potestas* was bound up with the woman wielding it.

The royal women of the later tenth century were able to draw from this specific Mercian feature of queenship and build their own reputation and power base. Eadgifu, the last wife of Edward the Elder, was influential throughout the reigns of the subsequent kings up to Edgar and regularly appears as witness in charters.⁴³ Her importance was not least

due to the absence of any (grand-)daughters-in-law, who could have competed with her for the position of queen. Athelstan's bachelorhood might have been the result of an agreement between both that allowed him, and later his brother Edmund, to rule and her to retain her prominent position.⁴⁴ The forced separation of Eadwig and his wife might also partly be due to Eadgifu's antagonism.⁴⁵ Her successor at court was Ælfthryth, Edgar's third wife, who achieved the height of female power by being consecrated with her husband and openly acknowledged as an important political person in the *Regularis Concordia*.⁴⁶ As quasi-regent for her son Æthelred, she ruled the realm with the help and advice of Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, until Æthelred asserted his independence and ejected her temporarily from his court.⁴⁷

Conclusion

As these examples of royal women show, the course of Anglo-Saxon queenship, its emergence from royal wife to consecrated queen, is strongly linked to three factors: maternity, kin and Christianity. A queen's principal duty was to bear children. Through her sons, she ensured the continuance of the dynasty, but she also legitimised herself. Kings were notorious for having several wives, and while the birth of sons did not guarantee lasting queenship, it nevertheless ensured a much better position. Thus, while the Legate's decree from 786 tied rightful kingship to legitimate birth, it also changed the status of royal wives: only through childbirth could they now retain their position.⁴⁸ Furthermore, several wives and hence several throneworthy sons reduced any certainty in a linear model of succession, and thus worked detrimentally to the development of factions at court and against a strengthened position of the king's wife.⁴⁹ While it might not always have been possible for the queen to establish a power base of her own among court members, her kin group could turn out to be decisive in maintaining her status. King Eadwig, for example, probably married his wife to gain much-needed Mercian support, but eventually her family connections did not prove strong enough to prevent separation and divorce.⁵⁰ Similar considerations were involved in the more political marriages of Æthelred and Æthelflæd, Offa and Cynethryth or Eadburh and Beorhtric for example. Here, two dynasties allied themselves to each other to strengthen their positions in the respective kingdoms, to gain support against adversaries, and frequently to legitimate claims to the throne. Lastly, the influence of Christianity changed the role of women in general, and of queens in particular. The emphasis on legitimacy necessitated legitimate wives, which in turn enabled queens to create a power base for themselves. In addition, queens were acknowledged as important during the conversion of pagan peoples and their particularly strong devotion also helped to establish the new faith. In the tenth century, the Benedictine Reform movement owed at least part of its success to Edgar's wife, Ælfthryth, who was a willing supporter of Æthelwold.⁵¹ The ecclesiastical transformation of kingship, of course, also had implications for the status of queens: a vicar of Christ could not reasonably be linked to a wife of doubtful standing. The consecration of Ælfthryth was thus a means to endow the queen with equal divine legitimation, although it has to be said that her status still did not match that of her husband. Only in very general terms did she participate in the divine ministry of rulership through her ability of child-bearing.

While kings may not need queens, queens certainly need kings in order to be queens. Although not immediately apparent from the sources, kingship and queenship are inter-linked: kings legitimised themselves through their queens and queens achieved status and power through kings. As the sources show, queens also ruled independently of their husbands, usually after the death of the latter. After the West-Saxon king Cenwealh died in 672, his queen Seaxburh reigned for one year after him. Ine's wife, Æthelburh, was noted in the *Chronicle* for demolishing Taunton (AD 722), a borough erected by her husband. While these two examples were outstanding enough to be recorded by chroniclers, they also reveal that ruling queens were not unusual in Anglo-Saxon England and that their power was acknowledged and obeyed, if only because no other ruler was available. The appearance of queens as witnesses in charters is a notable development from the eighth century onwards, and this, in particular, testifies to the growing importance of the king's wife. Queens from Cynethryth to Ælfthryth exemplify the slow incorporation of a female element in rulership and the changing status of queens in general. Christian marriage regulations and overall emphasis on legitimacy further enhanced, but also endangered the status of queens. In contrast to kings, the power of a queen derived mainly from her ability to produce sons and hence each queen had to earn it by herself anew. Offa's ambition to model his dynasty on the Carolingian royal family had far-reaching implications for his wife Cynethryth, which subsequently also influenced the status of later queens. Nevertheless, queens could not draw on the authority and power of their female predecessors in the same way as kings did: their status was inextricably linked to their very own person.

Notes

*A shorter version of this chapter appeared as 'Appetite for Power: The Anglo-Saxon *Regina gratia Dei*', *English Studies* 93 (2012), pp. 549–558.

¹ E.g. Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational Ltd., 1983) and *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England*. Vol. 1 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, *Double Agents. Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Jane Chance, *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Stacy S. Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); Janet Nelson, 'Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making and the Shaping of Medieval Queenship', in Janet Nelson, *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe. Alfred, Charles the Bald and Others* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), pp. 301–315; Elizabeth Tyler, *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c.1000–1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017); and Paul E. Szarmach (ed.), *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

² For example, Æthelberht §§ 10, 74 and 85, Alfred §§ 8, 11 and 18, and Ine § 31.

³ Wihtrud § 12, Ine §§ 7 and 17, Cnut § 76.

⁴ S 1459 (AD 1014 x 1016/authentic): Marriage Agreement of Wulfic, and S 1461 (AD 1016 x 1020/authentic): Marriage Agreement between Godwine and Brihtric.

⁵ The poems *Wulf and Eadwacer* and *The Wife's Lament* depict the problems women can experience in the kingroups of their husbands, ranging from hostility to neglect.

- ⁶ ll. 84b–92: '[T]he woman shall thrive, loved by the tribe. She shall be cheerful, keep counsel, and be liberal with horses and treasures. At the mead-drinking always everywhere before the band of comrades she shall greet the protector of æthelings first; quickly offer the first cup to the prince's hand and know wise counsel for the two of them together in their household' (trsl. Louis J. Rodrigues, *Anglo-Saxon Verse Charms, Maxims and Heroic Legends* [Pinner: Anglo-Saxon Books, 1994], pp. 110–123).
- ⁷ When Hrothgar, for example, passes over his own sons and offers the Danish throne to Beowulf after he successfully fought Grendel, Wealhtheow levels the offer and redefines it as request for help from Beowulf should her young sons need it when they ascend the throne (ll. 1168b–1191). See also Michael Enright, 'Lady with a Mead-Cup: Ritual, Group Cohesion and Hierarchy in the Germanic Warband', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 22 (1988), pp. 170–203.
- ⁸ *wealh* m. (gs. *wealas*): foreigner, stranger, slave + *ðeow* fm. servant, slave
- ⁹ On women as peace-weavers, see also Chance, *Woman as Hero*, ch. 1.
- ¹⁰ For Esther as *speculum reginae*, see Mary Clayton, 'Ælfric's *Esther*: A Speculum Reginae?', in H. Conrad-O'Brian, A. M. Darcy and J. Scattergood (eds.), *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Language and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp. 89–101, and Klein, *Ruling Women*, ch. 5.
- ¹¹ Sedulius, *Liber de Rectoribus Christianis* ch. 5: 'Etenim mulier inepta domus est ruina, divitiarum defectio, iniquorum saturatio, omnium malorum et vitiorum commoratio' (trsl. Edward G. Doyle, *Sedulius Scottus: 'On Christian Rulers' and 'The Poems'* [Binghampton, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983], p. 60).
- ¹² Sedulius, *Liber de Rectoribus Christianis* ch. 5: 'non solum nobilem, pulchram ac divitem, sed et castam, prudentem quoque atque in sanctis virtutibus morigeram habeat coniugem' (trsl. Doyle, *Sedulius Scottus*, p. 59).
- ¹³ Sedulius, *Liber de Rectoribus Christianis* ch. 5: '[A] chaste and prudent wife, diligently attending to useful matters with a humble demeanour and cheerful speech, peacefully manages her children and family; and, on behalf of her husband's welfare, if necessary, she sets her life against death and defends his wealth with an honourable reputation. [. . .] In effect, she becomes the increase of wealth, the support of the household, the delight of her husband, the glory of the family, and the union of all virtues. Indeed, it is proper for such a one [. . .] to reflect always an image of holiness and pious behavior, and to be an inventress of prudent counsels' (trsl. Doyle, *Sedulius Scottus*, p. 60).
- ¹⁴ Hincmar, *Ordine Palatii*, 72–75. The *dona annualia/annua* were demanded from the crown vassals and the churches and collected on fixed dates. Voluntary at the beginning, these gifts later developed into taxes (see p. 72, n. 165).
- ¹⁵ Cnut § 76; ASC C 1035 and 1043.
- ¹⁶ As Klein argues, Bede is deliberately departing from Pope Gregory the Great's view who thought that queens were essential in the mission's success (*Ruling Women*, p. 24).
- ¹⁷ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 19.
- ¹⁸ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 39.
- ¹⁹ The importance of royal abbesses will not be discussed further here since that would turn into a separate project. Cf., e.g., Foot, *Veiled Women*, and Pauline Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and Reform in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England', *Past and Present* 163 (1999), pp. 3–35.
- ²⁰ Cf., for example, Augustine's remarks in his *Confessions*, VI. 11–15. See also Shari Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure: Representing Women in Old English Literature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 103f.
- ²¹ Ch. 12 of the Legates' report, Haddan & Stubbs, p. 453: '[I]n the ordination of kings [. . .] kings are to be lawfully chosen by the priests and elders of the people, and are not to be those begotten in adultery or incest; for just as in our times according to the canons a bastard cannot attain to the priesthood, so neither can he who was not born of a legitimate marriage be the Lord's anointed and king of the whole kingdom and inheritor of the land' (trsl. EHD I no. 191).

- ²² Stafford, 'Political Women in Merica, Eighth to Early Tenth Centuries', p. 36, in Michelle Brown and Carol A. Farr (eds.), *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 35–49.
- ²³ Her legitimisation formulas are *Dei gratia* (S 116 [AD 780/authentic], 117 [AD 780/spurious], 118 [780/spurious; authentic elements]), *Deo donante* (S 120 [AD 781 = 780/not authentic; authentic elements]) and *Dei dono* (S 127 [AD 787/suspicious; authentic elements]). Overall, 23 queens appear in charters as grantors along their husbands and, most frequently, as witnesses on the subscription list.
- ²⁴ Philip Grierson and Mark Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage: With a Catalogue of the Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Vol. 1: The Early Middle Ages: 5th to 10th Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 280.
- ²⁵ Ian Stewart, 'The London Mint and the Coinage of Offa', p. 41, in Mark Blackburn (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Monetary History: Essays in Memory of Michael Dolley* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986), pp. 27–43.
- ²⁶ Stewart, *London Mint*, p. 41, and Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, p. 280.
- ²⁷ Gareth Williams, 'Mercian Coinage and Authority', pp. 216f, in Brown and Farr, *Mercia*, pp. 210–228. Here, Grierson and Blackburn add an even further level of political complexity: since Offa was on bad terms with Jænberht, archbishop of Canterbury, he might have taken the latter's minting rights and given them temporarily to Eadberht, bishop of London, until he created the see of Lichfield in 788 (*Medieval European Coinage*, p. 279).
- ²⁸ Stafford, *Political Women*, p. 38.
- ²⁹ Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800–1066', *Past and Present* 91 (1981), pp. 3–27, here p. 4.
- ³⁰ Asser, ch. 13–15. There is a certain irony in the fact that the queen in question was Eadburh, daughter of Offa, and later wife of Beorhtric of Wessex.
- ³¹ Nelson, *Rites of Queen-Making*, pp. 302f.
- ³² s.a. 856: 'In July, Æthelwulf king of the western English, on his way back from Rome, was betrothed to King Charles's daughter Judith. On 1 October, in the palace of Verberie he received her in marriage. After Hincmar, bishop of Rheims, had consecrated her and placed a diadem on her head, Æthelwulf formally conferred on her the title of queen, which was something not customary before then to him or to his people. When the marriage had been sealed by mutual exchange of royal gear and gifts, Æthelwulf sailed with Judith to Britain where his kingdom lay' (trsl. Janet Nelson, *The Annals of St-Bertin* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991], p. 83).
- ³³ See also Nelson, *Rites of Queen-Making*, pp. 306 and 313f for the Judith *ordo*.
- ³⁴ Asser, ch. 17 and *Annals of St Bertin* s.a. 858. One other prominent example of such a marriage comes to mind: Eadwald marrying Bertha, wife of his father Æthelberht of Kent (HE, II.5 and 6).
- ³⁵ Asser, ch. 12.
- ³⁶ Young widowed princesses would often return to their father and were made available again on the medieval marriage market. While they might have had more of a choice in their subsequent husbands, princesses could evade paternal decisions by choosing for themselves and marrying as quickly as possible the next suitable candidate of their liking. Judith might have seen Æthelwald as her way out of paternal prescription and similar feelings might have prompted her to elope with count Baldwin of Flanders.
- ³⁷ Both never use the titles *rex* or *regina* in their charters, they did not issue independent coinage, and their charters were issued with reference to permission of Alfred and Edward the Elder respectively (Stafford, *Political Women*, p. 45).
- ³⁸ Stafford, *Political Women*, pp. 44f. On Ealhswith, see Asser, ch. 73.
- ³⁹ EHD I, 110–13.
- ⁴⁰ *Mercian Register* s.a. 918: 'But very soon after [i.e. obtaining submission from Leicester and York] they had agreed to this, she died twelve days before midsummer in Tamworth, in the eighth year in which with lawful authority she was holding dominion over the Mercians' (trsl. EHD I no. 1).

- ⁴¹ S 217 (AD 880 for 887/perhaps authentic), 218 (AD 883/perhaps authentic), 219 (AD 884/authentic), 220 (AD 888/authentic), 221 (AD 891/original), 222 (AD 883 x 911/perhaps authentic; authentic elements) and 225 (AD 878 for 915/authentic).
- ⁴² Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 7 and 8 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000–2001), 7, pp. 29 and 87.
- ⁴³ She is styled *regina* only three times (S 477 [AD 941/spurious], 546 [AD 949/perhaps authentic] and 1212 [AD 959/authentic]), and later attests as *mater regis* or *aua/euax regis* (grandmother). Offa's queen Cynethryth, by contrast, still subscribes as *regina* after Offa's death in the charters of her son Ecgrifith (S 149 [AD 796/authentic], 150 [AD 796/not authentic; authentic elements] and 151 [AD 796/not authentic; authentic elements]).
- ⁴⁴ Stafford, *King's Wife in Wessex*, p. 25, and Barbara Yorke, 'The Women in Edgar's Life', pp. 146f, in Donald Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959–975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 143–157.
- ⁴⁵ Stafford, *King's Wife in Wessex*, p. 18.
- ⁴⁶ Like Edgar, she might have been consecrated twice, first at her wedding and then in 973 together with her husband at Bath. The latter consecration is referred to in the *Vita Oswaldi* (IV.7); the former can be deduced from her royal styles ('legitima prefati regis coniuncx') in S 745 and 746 (cf. Sean Miller [ed.], *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 9 [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], pp. 95–116, and ch. 4). In the *Regularis Concordia*, she is referred to as protectress of nunneries, but also always included in the general intercessory prayers for the king (see chapter 5).
- ⁴⁷ Cf. Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Athelred the Unready* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), ch. 4. See also Yorke for further info on Ælfthryth (*Women in Edgar's Life*, pp. 143–157).
- ⁴⁸ Anglo-Saxon kings from the late eighth and early ninth century onwards (and particularly in the tenth century) appear to have been rather willing to cast aside wives. I do not know of any of Bede's queens that was repudiated on the grounds of childlessness. Instead, early kings remained married to their wives, even against all odds (Ecgrifith and Æthelthryth come to mind).
- ⁴⁹ Stafford, *King's Wife in Wessex*, pp. 8–10.
- ⁵⁰ Stafford, *King's Wife in Wessex*, p. 15.
- ⁵¹ Yorke, *Women in Edgar's Life*, p. 149.

Reformers and Rulers

The changes in the political landscape of Anglo-Saxon England due to the Viking invasions of the ninth century, and the subsequent establishment of one Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the first half of the tenth century, also had an impact on the development of the ecclesiastical landscape. The former monastic structure was disrupted, although the Viking invasion was not as devastating as some sources suggest, and there is evidence for a low-key continuity of minsters during and after the upheaval caused by the Vikings. Kings also took the opportunity to appropriate monastic lands and many monasteries were absorbed into the secular world as royal residences or towns. Gradually, the dominance of monasteries as in early Anglo-Saxon England came to an end as minsters were secularised and urbanised.¹

A letter by Radbod, prior of St Samson's at Dol, offers a glimpse into the state of the Anglo-Saxon church in the first half of the tenth century. Radbod praises the religious zeal of King Athelstan as testified by his growing collection of saints' relics.² Athelstan is hailed as 'exalter of the Holy Church, subduer of wicked barbarism, mirror of your kingdom, example of all goodness, disperser of enemies, father of clerics, helper of the poor, lover of all the saints, invoker of the angels',³ which contradict the common assumption that the Church had lain in ruins until the time of the reform movement. The kings of the Wessex dynasty pursued ecclesiastical politics in a clear-sighted and prudent manner, and Alfred's influence was still visible in Edgar's reign.⁴ Yet the upheaval of the ninth century and the political developments of the tenth necessitated a reformation of the ecclesiastical landscape not just in regard to the monastic structure, but also in regard to religious service. In hindsight, the ensuing Benedictine Reform movement was a natural and almost inevitable step and its success was due to the serendipitous encounter of ecclesiastical reformers and royal supporters who were driven by the same zeal and desire for changes. Indeed, the king stands very much at the centre of the reformed Church structure and the outstanding feature of the reform movement is that it was court-driven and royally sponsored and enforced.⁵

The focus on the reform movement and its principal participants has all but eclipsed studies on the impact the movement had on the ruler image.⁶ The two exceptions are studies on Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity*, and on works of art like the depiction of Edgar in Winchester's refoundation charter or on the frontispiece of the *Regularis Concordia*.⁷

The reformers themselves, however, left little information about their political thoughts behind, despite their indebtedness to the kings for the success of their efforts. It might be due to the very nature of the surviving documents that allows us to see the era of the reform within a very distinct framework: the intricate relationship between royal (in-) action and consequential divine response and retribution. The first wave of the reform movement, its beginning and first successes up to Edgar's death, are court-driven in such a way that the ecclesiastical instigators almost recede into the background and their role in forming the ruler towards promoting their cause almost disappears behind the king. Bishops were comparatively powerless, but with the Benedictine Reform movement and a willing king at their side, their position, influence and authority reached new heights. In the first part of the ensuing discussion, the focus is therefore placed on the royal actions as prompted by the episcopal counsellors, which is not only an expression of this newly-won authority, but also of the elevated position as royal educator. After the deaths of the first reformers and rulers, the violent reaction of the anti-monastic-movement and the disputed successions of Edward the Martyr and Æthelred Unræd, the second wave of the reform movement set in. This was subtle in its attempts to draw in the king as it was more concerned with combating external evils, mainly the Viking threat and the general lawlessness in its train. The king is called upon to realise his wrongdoings and make amends. Several charters explicitly point to Æthelred's period of youthful recklessness.⁸ It is in this light that Wulfstan's *Polity* with its accompanying tracts must be seen: a reformed ecclesiastical ruler image had been set down during Edgar's reign and now it is Æthelred's duty to model his behaviour as king accordingly. The problems of his reign are the divine sign, even call, for order. The second part of the following discussion will hence focus on the divine response as triggered by the king's actions. In a final part, the conclusions thus reached will be placed within the wider context of royal education, and how the clergy attempted to model royal behaviour and the attitudes towards the royal office according to specifically ecclesiastical codes.

Ecclesiastical Politics I: Edgar – Royal Action

The main actors contributing to the changes in the Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical landscape from c.950 onwards were two kings and three bishops: Eadwig and Edgar, and Dunstan, Oswald and Æthelwold. Each of these had a unique influence on the reform movement, and their interaction on various levels allowed for the emergence of a strengthened episcopal position which in turn influenced and changed the relationship between Church and State.⁹ The courses of the early lives of Dunstan, Oswald and Æthelwold run in similar patterns. All of these men came, to a certain extent, from an aristocratic background and spent considerable time at the royal court. They were well adapted to royal behaviour, which shaped their attitude towards kings and kingship concepts and how these relate to the episcopal office.¹⁰ Although one has to be careful in believing the hagiographical panegyrics of their later biographers, all three assumed an attitude towards kingship that was rather new in comparison to their predecessors. It was one of the strengths of these three reformers to realise how essential the support of the king would be in their visions of a reformed monastic life, while still assuming a mature and emancipated, almost superior, attitude towards their kings.

The famous coronation episode of Eadwig is a case in point. According to the *Vita Sancti Dunstani* by B, Eadwig went off frolicking with some lascivious women after enduring a long coronation banquet, and was dragged back with force by Abbot Dunstan and Bishop Cynesige.¹¹ The biographer goes into little detail apart from the royal bad behaviour, yet this event was at the centre of a whole array of political implications.¹² The opposing views of the different kin groups and forces at court have to be evaluated alongside Eadwig's own intentions. After all, the new king was a sixteen-year-old youth who was placed in the line of famous and successful ancestors with the full weight of a kingdom on his young shoulders. Certainly, he did not display suitable royal behaviour, but on this occasion Dunstan overreached himself. As a prominent abbot and member of the court, Dunstan perceived it as his duty to educate the king and so prepare him for his royal duties, maybe not even realising the change in power structures upon the accession of the new king. As 'dearest of all to [Eadred]',¹³ he was used to conducting the sick king's business and might have presumed to occupy a similar role under Eadwig.¹⁴ The result was his immediate exile (ASC A 955, D 956) and Eadwig was quick to create his own retinue, as evidenced by the extent of his grants in 956.¹⁵ This is an almost inevitable process on the accession of a new king, and could be interpreted as 'buying'¹⁶ his own entourage or an attempt to assert his independence from his father's followers and advisors.¹⁷ As the older and more experienced of the two, Dunstan must have understood it as his duty to teach good royal conduct, yet Eadwig, as a newly minted king, did not tolerate any interference. This failure to teach a king good manners in the first instance led to Eadwig distancing himself from his archbishop, and thus ecclesiastical control. Only a year later, Eadwig was suitably punished for his behaviour and disobedience, if one wants to see it in this light, and his realm was split with his younger brother Edgar succeeding to the part north of the Thames.¹⁸ This division is attributed to Eadwig's inabilities as a ruler, and also as some divine response to the exile of the later saint Dunstan. Only two accounts are mild in their judgement of Eadwig's behaviour, attributing it to 'his cildhades nyteness'¹⁹ and his 'insolens iuuentus',²⁰ respectively. Another chronicler of that time, Æthelweard, even ignored the division: 'Tenuit namque quadriennio per regnum amandus'.²¹ Dunstan returns from exile, and inspired by his sojourn at Ghent, renews his vigour in reforming monastic life.

This vigour found a fervent supporter in Edgar, who succeeded to the whole of Anglo-Saxon England after the death of his brother Eadwig in 959. His active involvement is visible in three stages of the reform: the ejection of the secular canons from the Winchester minster and others; the issue of the refoundation charter of the New Minster, Winchester, (S 745); and the promulgation of the *Regularis Concordia*.

Under the annal 964, the A version (and much more briefly the E version) of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* relates how Edgar expelled the secular clerics from several minsters throughout his realm and installed monks in their stead. This event is recorded in four accounts, with different emphasis on Edgar's involvement: in both Ælfric's and Wulfstan of Winchester's *Life of St Æthelwold*, the king is rather passive in comparison to Æthelwold; yet following the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Æthelwold's own account, the king was the driving force behind this step, acting as protector and defender of the Church.²² The original, more warlike aspects of defender of the Church of Isidore's time had now made way to assume a rather spiritual dimension. The king protects and defends the Church, and thus by extension his realm, through ensuring a certain standard of divine service.

He guaranteed that the clergy were able to fulfil their duty of interceding on the king's behalf with God and, in turn, safeguarding the well-being of the whole realm. Edgar, therefore, acted within the context of his duties as Christian king and vicar of Christ on earth. Simultaneously, however, he assumes a level of kingship that placed him above the Church.

The necessity of strong royal support to cleanse the minsters points again to the weak position of the Anglo-Saxon episcopate and its need for a stronger power to achieve its aims. This event had been planned carefully and was not a rash royal decision: a surviving letter from Pope John XII gives papal permission for this step.²³ Æthelwold too speaks of the king educating himself and learning about the Benedictine rule before he decides to evict the secular canons:

Hit eac swa on bocum awriten is: Se þe god beginnan þence, he þæt angin on him sylfum astelle. Æfter þam þe he sylf geriht wearð, began georne mynstera wide geond his cynerice to rihtlæcynne, & Godes þeowdom to arærenne. Þæt swa wearð gelæst þurh þa fultumigendan Godes gife: breac þa gesinlice Dunstanes his ercebisceopes rædes; þurh his myndgunge he wes smeagende embe his saule hæle, & no þæt an, ac eac swylce be ealre æfæstnesse & gesundfulnesse his andwealdes.²⁴

Edgar's eagerness to correct the wrongs in his kingdom is preceded by his desire to learn and be instructed in the correct ways. Following the teachings of his bishop, Edgar is the royal instrument that achieves the reform of the monasteries. Like his great ancestor Alfred before him, who was very much concerned with education and the reform of justice, Edgar follows the tradition of self-educating kings; he, however, takes it one step further by concentrating on spiritual education and the improvement of religion.²⁵ After the reform of the mind, as brought about by Alfred, Edgar set out to reform the soul. The model of kingship as personified by Alfred as the *rex philosophus* was transformed into the *rex religiosus* as personified by Edgar.

The next stage in this process was to ratify the new movement on parchment and hence turn the royal authority behind it into something tangible and eternal.²⁶ The refoundation charter of the New Minster, Winchester (S 745) is special in so far as it is not merely a record of land grants (indeed, there are no lands at all mentioned in the charter²⁷) or certain rights, privileges and immunities, but because it provides the constitutional framework for the reform. Its very make-up already denotes its special status: golden letters, a coloured frontispiece as pictorial emblem of the written charter and the subscriptions of the highest-ranking persons of the realm.²⁸ The text itself links Scriptural Time with current Anglo-Saxon time: the fall of mankind and its redemption through Christ is paralleled by the fall of the monasteries into secular hands and their redemption through Edgar.²⁹ Thus, the mere account of how the monastic life was revived under Edgar within the framework of the charter endows it with a decidedly religious dimension, and places it within the teleological frame of Scriptural Time. The eviction of the secular canons has become religious destiny as foreshadowed by events in the Old Testament. Chapters VI to VIII of the charter in particular focus on how Edgar acts as vicar of Christ.

In the charter, the debasement of the worldly clerics is understood as a breach of contract between church and state. As Edgar says:

Quod nullis mihi intercessionibus prodesse poterant. sed potius ut beatus ait Gregorius iusti uindictam iudicis prouocarent qui uariis uitiorum neuis contaminati[.]³⁰

It was the duty of the king to defend and protect the Church and it was the duty of the Church to intercede with God on behalf of the king. This implicit contract between both powers was the very foundation of every Christian kingdom. In this instance, however, the Church fell short of this pact, so that Edgar was justified in his actions. This underlying contract is then re-enforced in chapters XV and XVI of the charter:

XV. Abbas autem armis succinctus. spiritalibus. monachorum cuneo hinc inde uallatus . carismatum celestium rore perfusus . aerias demonum expugnans uersutias . regem omnemque sui regminis clerum . Christo cuius uirtute dimicant iuuante . a rabida hostium persecutione inuisibilium . sollerter spiritus gladio defendens . fidei scuto subtili protegens tutamine . robusto prelians triumpho miles eripiat inperterritus .

[. . .]

XVI. Rex itidem terrenus celestis castra regis fortissimo roborans munimine . armis secularibus uisibiles expugnans aduersarios . hostiumque rabiem seuientium ad nihilando deiciens . conditoris sui pascua gregemque sollicita inexpugnabilis tueatur custodia . quatinus ad uitae brauium perueniens . eternis tripudians fruatur bonis . quae nec oculus uidere aliquatenus potuit humanus . nec in hominis cor ullatenus ascendit . que preparauit Deus diligentibus se .³¹

In particular, the abbot of the New Minster ought to protect the king with ‘the subtle shield of faith’ and so defend him and the clergy against the snares of the devil. At the same time, the king ought to protect the clergy with worldly arms and so fortify the camp of God.

Overall, then, this charter lays down a constitution for the whole reform movement by politicising an ecclesiastical matter and transferring it into the secular realm. The king is the focus: without his royal support, this step would not have been feasible and the royal dominance of this whole movement is asserted throughout the refoundation charter. Edgar is very explicitly linked with Christ and promulgated and promoted as his vicar on earth. As such, he has to protect the religious realm, even from the inside. In this charter, then, Edgar *rex religiosus* is elevated again above the clergy by assuming authority outside his own secular sphere, and correcting wrongs in the ecclesiastical sphere. The extent to which he is involved in Church affairs thus points to a model of kingship that is emancipated from, and almost independent of, Church interference but also displays a high degree of royal intervention in ecclesiastical matters.

The refoundation charter of the New Minster, Winchester, created the political frame for the final stage in this development, the *Regularis Concordia*, which in turn re-framed the whole matter in an ecclesiastical context. This monastic agreement contained a common rule of life to be observed by all monasteries in Anglo-Saxon England. Like the charter, the text includes many references to royal support, and it begins likewise with an account of Edgar’s restoration of the monasteries. Explicitly, his role is given a theological dimension that justifies his intervention:

Regali utique functus officio ueluti Pastorum Pastor sollicitus a rabidis perfidorum rictibus, uti hiantibus luporum faucibus, oues quas Domini largiente gratia studiosus collegerat muniendo eripuit; coniugique suae Ælfthritae sanctimonialium mandras ut impauidi more custodis defenderet

cautissime praecepit; ut uidelicet mas maribus, femina feminis, sine ullo suspicionis scrupulo subueniret.³²

It is in this quote that the transformation of the ruler image in purely ecclesiastical terms finds fulfilment. The *Rule* does not speak of any educational motivation nor of the uselessness of the worldly clerics; instead, it speaks of the duty of the king, the duty of his office, to correct and amend any wrongs in the secular and religious spheres of his kingdom, thus positioning him at the head of both realms. Chapter 4 then states that it was upon the advice of the king that the *Rule* was drawn up, another reference to how seriously Edgar took the aspects of correction and education of his kingship.

According to the refoundation charter, Edgar was prompted to react because of useless prayers of intercession. While the *Regularis Concordia* does not refer to such a motive, it continually reinforces the importance of such prayers. Eight chapters refer to that duty of the clergy which was so essential to the realm as a whole.³³ The physical well-being of a realm was ensured by the king's military might; the spiritual well-being of the realm was ensured through constant intercession with God and His saints. The implementation of that duty into the liturgical routine of daily masses ensured a constant spiritual defence system.³⁴

Edgar's fourth law code has to be understood within this framework. This code dates from before the eviction of the worldly clerics (964), the refoundation charter (966) and the *Regularis Concordia* (c.973), and is thus a first-hand witness to the necessity of having 'valid' prayers of intercession. In the prologue, it is stated how 'Eadgar cyningc wæs smeagende, hwæt to bote mihte æt ðæm færcwealme, ðe his leodscipe swyðe drehte & wanode wide gynd his anweald.'³⁵ Divine displeasure resulted in a sudden onslaught of some pestilence, and Edgar tries to remedy it by re-enforcing the duty to pay tithes:

Dæt is þonne ærest, þæt him þuhte & his witum, þæt þus gerad ungelimp mid synnum & mid oferhyrnysse Godes beboda geearnod wære, & swyðost mid þam oftige þæs neadgafoles, þe Cristene men Gode gelæstan scoldon on heora teoðingsceattum.³⁶

It might seem odd that the reason for a calamity was thought to lie in withholding taxes rather than in moral or religious transgressions, like general sinfulness or increased crimes. Yet these are all crimes of disobedience towards an authority. The withholding of tithes equals the rejection of a religious and secular authority. Since very early on, Edgar perceives his office as protector of the Church to such a degree that he can be regarded as its head: the refusal of Church taxes is not so much a trespass against the Church as institution as against his royal office and person. Even before Edgar assumes a more active role as defender and protector of the Church, he understands clearly the way religious and secular realms are interlinked and how both have to act together to achieve common well-being. The requirement of daily intercessions for king and queen is then a powerful instrument to tie both spheres even closer together.

The stages of the Benedictine Reform movement are also the stages of a transformation of the ruler image within a religious framework. The more the process progressed, the more actively involved King Edgar became. Royal support was palpable throughout, but with the creation of a political and constitutional framework and the promulgation of a unified rule for the re-established monasteries, the process was finalised and ratified by

and through the king. The refoundation charter and the *Regularis Concordia* refer to the necessity and indispensability of royal intervention. Of course, the king acted upon the advice and prompting of his trusted advisors Dunstan and Æthelwold, whose political authority derived from their episcopal office.³⁷ Thus, the ecclesiastical transformation of the ruler image can be mainly ascribed to the agency of Dunstan and Æthelwold (although Æthelwold was identified as the writer of both S 745 and the *Regularis Concordia*, Dunstan's hand behind it is clearly visible).³⁸ They both strongly influenced the understanding of royal office and royal duties, so much so that at the end of the process the Anglo-Saxon kingship concept is even further removed from its continental equivalent than before. Unlike the Frankish kings, for example, Edgar had achieved dominion over the secular and religious realm, and both authorities were combined in the royal person. The interesting feature is the almost deliberate surrender of ecclesiastical authority to the king: the result of the reformers' efforts was an inversion of royal hegemonial claims from the outside towards the inside. The king was depicted as the ultimate representative of his people before God and as bearer of an authority that was stronger and greater than all other powers in his realm combined.³⁹ The king was the only and highest authority in his earthly kingdom, to which even the religious heads had to bow. What is emphasised in all these documents is the authority of God behind all royal action and the indispensable necessity to obey Him. King and bishop, secular and religious realm, were hence even closer intertwined than before.

Ecclesiastical Politics II: Æthelred – Divine Retribution

Reading the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* annals for Æthelred's reign paints a picture of impending doom for the English nation, indeed of the English striding ahead on the road to perdition. The situation appears hopeless, and no matter what measures the king takes it just gets the nation deeper into trouble. Æthelred thus seems to have earned his epithet *unræd* with all honours.⁴⁰ Prevalent in the accounts of Æthelred's rulership is the sense of a deity angered and punitive. The reigns of father and son, Edgar and Æthelred, were juxtaposed along the religious line of crime and punishment, of human sin and divine retribution.⁴¹ The chronicler of Æthelred's reign wrote with hindsight and his personal feelings colour many annals, and it is this personal dimension which intensifies the feeling of doom, but because of that he is also able to emphasise the theme of divine retribution and thus (deliberately) directs the reader (medieval as well as modern) towards a certain interpretation of events. The whole reign is framed by an almost conventional religious theme, an interpretation which was shared by many contemporaries, and hence serves as a moral, social, historical, political and cultural didactic piece for kingship. The divine wrath, and the ensuing emphasis on the reciprocal relationship of royal action and divine response, informed and changed the understanding of rulership, and brought it closer towards the concept of Christ-centred kingship.

The idea that national disasters are a divine response to national or personal sins is not new to Æthelred's reign. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* speaks of the sinful Britons who were rightfully punished (HE, I.12–16 and 22), Alcuin of York and King Alfred see divine wrath behind the Viking attacks of the eighth and ninth centuries,⁴² and even King Edgar issued a law code (IV Edgar) to remedy national faults and regain divine favour. What

is so special in Æthelred's case is the extent to which the king, and in particular the kingdom at large, were drawn into the programme of spiritual cleansing and repentance. Within the framework of sin and retribution, the stages in this process can be outlined as follows:

- the troubled period of accession, the anti-monastic reaction, Æthelwold's death and Æthelred's own rebellious behaviour, beginning of Viking attacks (975 to 980s)
- *response*: Æthelred's repentance in charters and restoration of lands and rights wrongfully appropriated (mid to late 990s)
- continued Viking attacks, treachery of Ealdorman Ælfric
- *response*: tribute payment, promulgation of law codes I–IV, peace treaty with Richard, duke of Normandy, and marriage to his daughter Emma (late 990s to 1005)
- Viking attacks 1006–1007, appointment of Eadric as *ealdorman* of the Mercians
- *response*: law code V, edict of 1009, *Agnus Dei* coinage (1008–1009)
- arrival of Thorkell's army, treachery of Eadric, internal troubles with ship-levy, martyrdom of archbishop of Canterbury (1009–1013)
- *response*: exile of king, law code VIII, *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (1013–1014)
- continued attacks, treachery of Eadric, revolt of Edmund, arrival of Cnut and his army (death of Æthelred) (1014–1016)
- *response*: (death of Æthelred)⁴³ accession of Cnut (1016)

Ordered in this way, one can see the relationship between a certain event and the reaction it provoked. In particular, however, one can see how the responses attained a more comprehensive character. Up to the early years of the new millennium, the remedies brought forward to end the Viking attacks were centred on the king, his reformation, his repentance and his measures. The focus only then shifted onto the nation as a whole when the means of the king were exhausted. It is the king's duty to govern and protect his realm so all efforts should come from him and be focused on him; yet one needs to consider the symbolism and instrumentality of both king and Vikings. Symbolically, the king represents his realm while the Vikings represent God's anger. Instrumentally, the king is the object on which national sin and repentance are played out, while the Vikings act as the divinely chosen instrument of God's punishment and purge.⁴⁴ What the outline above then shows is that it is not the king alone who is at fault but the whole kingdom. Indeed, following current accounts as, for example, the anonymous *De Tribulatione*, the English as a nation were guilty of incurring God's anger:

Heu! Heu! quam nimis amara quam[que] mala tempora nostris diebus pro peccatis euener[un]t, quum non solum prescriptis peruersitatibus sed aliis diuersis criminibus pene omnis ordo gentis Anglorum maculatus, Christum diu ad iracundiam prouocans, iam quod meruit sustinet. Et quia legem & precepta domini omni modo neglexerat, & monita doctorum contempserat, ideo omnibus nationibus terrarum magis cladibus et depredationibus inumeris & inimicorum obseditionibus angustatur. Neque vero post primum aduentum Anglorum patria eorum tot & tam inaudita pericula experta est quot nunc gemens sustinet. Sed tam infinitam pecuniam populus sepe pro libertate regni dederat ut uix aut nullo modo patria ad pristinam opulentiam perueniet. Quid plura? quantis malis, quantisque perturbationibus, gens illa obpressa sit, bello uidelicet, fame, igni cedibusque, quanta populorum milia absque numero trucidati sint, quanti captiui absque discretionem per diuersas regiones dispersi, non est lingua que modum uel numerum edicere possit.⁴⁵

The king and his *ealdormen* are then just the prominent examples that emerge out of the mass of general depravity. Indeed, Ælfric, as well as the chronicler himself, does not blame Æthelred as much as he blames the whole nation. Although Ælfric is in general rather subdued in his political comments, which are spread among his extensive body of works, his view seems to be one of defending royal policies rather than criticising the king directly. In his text *Wyrðwriteras*, for example, Ælfric does not accuse the king of delegating military campaigns to generals but rather criticises the choice of incapable generals:⁴⁶

Wyrðwriteras us secgað, ða ðe awritan be cyningum, þæt þa ealdan cyningas on ðam ærran timan hogodon hu hi mihton heora byrðena alihtan, for þan ðe an man ne mæg æghwar beon, and ætsomne ealle þing aberan, þeah ðe he anweald hæbbe. Ða gesetton þa cyningas, him sylfum to fultume, ealdormen under him, and hi oft asendon to manegum gewinnum, swa swa hit awriten is ge on hæpenum bocum ge on bibiotheacan; and þa ealdormen gewyldon þa onwinnendan fynd, swa swa we wyllað secgan sume bysne be þam of þam ledenbocum, þæt man us ne lihnige. [. . .] Langsume tale we magon macian be ðysum gif we wyllað secgan be þam ðe us secgað bec, of þam ðe us becymð se wisdom and seo wissung, hu oft wurdon asende þa sigefæstan heretogan to manegum gewinnum heora leodum to ware; and ða cyningas sæton him sylfe swaðeah æt ham ymbe oðre bysga heora leodum to þearfe.⁴⁷

The last sentence is particularly telling: the king should stay behind so he can order things at home. This seems, however, to have contradicted the army's wishes: the chronicler reports dissatisfaction among the soldiers and their demands that their king should join them.⁴⁸ What these two examples illustrate is a changing conception of responsibility for the affairs in the realm. Ælfric's text proclaims the need for counsellors and thus (re-)justifies an age-old institution, the *witan*. The anonymous *De Tribulatione* points to the responsibility of the whole nation to live according to God's law. Everyone has a share in the well-being of the realm. The king as instrument of national reformation and repentance is at the centre of all efforts, but the prosperity and welfare of the state is seen as no longer depending on him alone but on the communal efforts of all. If we now compare briefly Edgar's reign with Æthelred, we can see how kingship with the king at the centre of all action gives way to kingship with a king on whom activities are played out. Although there is a seeming passivity in this idea of kingship, the king as the very instrument of national repentance is active with regard to his function: the king has to present and deliver the nation's repentance to God. As such, the king retreats somewhat behind the English as corporate body politic, but only for them to realise the necessity of change and for them to accept the Vikings as a national rather than personal purge. The apparent futility of Æthelred's efforts is then the symptom of a national ill that can only be cured by a combined and communal effort.

It is perhaps the re-enforced realisation that the English nation is a corporate entity with the king as its head that influenced Wulfstan's efforts and allowed him to conceive of the English people as Holy Society.⁴⁹ In a way, the interpretation of the Viking attacks as the instrument of divine punishment allowed for a reconfiguration of society on a national scale. Since the divine punishment was inflicted upon all and not a select few, everyone was given warning and also an opportunity to repent and return to God's laws. The way society had worked hitherto must have been at fault to incur such divine anger,

hence it followed that society had to be re-modelled. The idea that the Anglo-Saxons have the potential to become God's chosen people had been current since King Alfred gave his dooms the Old Testament framework of Mosaic law.⁵⁰ In the later laws of Æthelred, this potential is fully realised, especially when combining them with other texts by Wulfstan. Since 1008, Wulfstan perceived Anglo-Saxon society as being able to flourish again if it paid proper attention to earlier decrees and if it again followed the commands of Scripture and the king.⁵¹ Æthelred's fifth law code and the 1009 edict are all directed towards this end: the laws are intended to change society on an internal moral level while the 1009 edict calls for external national penance. Primarily, these decrees are meant as appeasement to God and a means to regain divine favour; secondarily, they are also the first stage in re-modelling a society's moral code of conduct. Indirectly, too, the law code reveals just how very badly the English behaved, and that changing them would require a much greater effort.⁵² The immediate and dire necessity of improvement and repentance is obvious in the 1009 edict. The importance of communal penance as ritual of national cleansing should not be underestimated; indeed, Wulfstan himself emphasises that repentance is the only means to regain God's favour:

*Ecce iam lapsi sumus. Stare nullo modo possumus. In peccatis grauati iacemus, sed qui nos rectos condidit adhuc expectat ut surgamus, sin uero suae pietatis aperit et nos ad se recipere per penitentiam querit. Sed penitentiam digne agere non possumus si modum eius paenitentiae non cognoscimus. Penitentiam quippe agere est et pepertrata mala plangere et que penitendo plangimus nullatenus repetamus. Nam qui sic alia deplorat ut tamen alia committat penitentiam agere nescit. [. . .] Legitur enim de serpentis prudentia in euangelio, et aiunt quidam quod priusquam ueniat ad fontem bibere uomat omne uenenum. Sic et tu quicumque es Christianus: cum accesseris ad altare ut accipias communionem, uome uenenum malitiae peccatorum tuorum, et dimitte siquid habes aduersus alterum, et da confessionem puram Deo et sacerdoti illius, et conuertere toto corde ad Deum, et age penitentiam ab omnibus peccatis tuis, et tunc sacram communionem cum pura mente et libera conscientia non ad iudicium sed ad remedium accipere fiducialiter poteris.*⁵³

Only a corporate display of penance with a full understanding and acknowledgment of the wrongs committed might prevent worse, and only a corporate effort might be successful. Within the process of realising the transformation of the English into Wulfstan's Holy Society, this three-day penance gained a baptismal dimension: what is promulgated here is a ritual of spiritual cleansing, including confession, fast, alms-giving, masses and self-mortification to return to the state of baptismal grace.⁵⁴ Similarly, the purging of the sins through penance allows the people to participate again in communion with God, to be reconceived of a people of God.

The elements of the prescribed penance are not new, but the combination of them in one decree on one occasion had a much stronger impact and would have made everyone aware of just how desperate the situation was.⁵⁵ The last four words of the 1009 edict 'God ure helpe. Amen.' express this despair most clearly, but by undergoing the ritual of penance and hence purification, the English are 'reborn' as it were, as a new society. After penance, they should emerge spiritually clean and hence worthy again of God's favour. As the enfolding events show, however, this programme of national penance was not immediately successful, and worse was to come.

The Viking ravages continued, as did the depravity of the English. With the arrival of Swein Forkbeard and his proclamation as king in 1013, Æthelred's position as king had become untenable and exile was the only solution. In general, the concept of theocratic kingship allowed for the deposition of kings by the episcopate, although this was rarely done and never in Anglo-Saxon England,⁵⁶ but the case was rather different with the exile of a king. One line in Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* survives as an immediate reaction, which speaks of treacheries against one's lord culminating in the king being driven from the country.⁵⁷ While this could be interpreted in a rather modern sense as an expression of the people's dissatisfaction for their ruler, early medieval political thought did not allow for this possibility. Ælfric expresses a common sentiment when he says:

We wyllað secgan eow sum bigspell. Ne mæg nan man hine sylfne to cynge gedon, ac þæt folc hæfð cyre to ceosenne þone to cyninge þe him sylfum licað: ac syððan he to cyninge gehalgod bið, þonne hæfð he anweald ofer þam folce, and hi ne magon his geoc of heora swyran asceacan.⁵⁸

Kingship, whether good or bad, had to be endured, and, like the Viking raids, bad kingship was a symptom of God's displeasure at the whole nation and a call for improvement.⁵⁹ In Wulfstan's view, the sacrament of anointing bestowed indelible royal authority onto the king and so he cannot be deposed.⁶⁰ Instead, his efforts are directed towards improving the situation: the king will be judged according to his deeds on Doomsday – and Wulfstan's writings prove that he regarded the royal authority as superior and that the king was the lynchpin of society.⁶¹ Even in Æthelred's last law code, the king's position is emphasised: 'Forðam Cristen cyning is Cristes gespelia on Cristenre þeode; and he sceal Cristes abilgðe wrecan swiðe georne.'⁶² Here the overall frame of Mosaic law is referred to again, within which offences against the state could be interpreted as offences against God.⁶³ Treachery against the king becomes treachery against God, who before had chosen the king as ruler over the people. Since God's choice was thus rejected, the English merited worse.

The *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* can be considered as an ultimate effort to raise awareness of the Anglo-Saxon nation's state and as a last appeal for improvement. The catalogue of sins and trespasses is a long and gruesome read, very different from the heroic world of Anglo-Saxon poetry. In the context of penitential literature, the relationship between sin and society can be explored through the concept of shame.⁶⁴ Shame in the *Sermo* functions as making public the sins of the English, literally as shaming them into repentance. The Viking threats are here paralleled with English sinfulness, so much so that the Vikings act as the 'dark *alter ego* for the English'.⁶⁵ This juxtaposition of Viking violence and English sins culminates in one last powerful parallel: the Britons of Gildas are compared with the Anglo-Saxons of Wulfstan:

An þeodwita wæs on Brytta tidum, Gildas hatte. Se awrat be heora misdædum, hu hy mid heora synnum swa oferlice swyþe God gegræmedan, þæt He let æt nyhstan Engla here heora eard gewinnan, & Brytta dugeþe forðon mid ealle. & þæt wæs geworden þæs þe he sæde, þurh gelæredra regolbryce & ðurh læwedra lahbryce, þurh ricra reaflic & þurh gitsunge wohgestreona; ðurh leode unlagu & þurh wohdomas, ðurh biscopas asolcennesse & unsnotornesse, & þurh lyðre yrhðe Godes bydela, þe soþes geswugedan ealles to gelome & clumedan mid ceafum þær hy scoldan clypian. Þurh fulne eac folces gælsan & þurh oferfylla & mænigfealde synna heora eard hy forworhtan & selfe hy forwurðan.⁶⁶

According to the text, the Britons had suffered from similar levels of depravity to that of the English; as punishment God had sent the Germanic tribes, who then settled in Britain and subjugated the native Britons. About 600 years later, the moral depravity of the English reached similar depths to that of the Britons so that God sent the Vikings. So far (that is 1014), subjection to them had been narrowly avoided, but with the death of the king two years later the parallels between both societies became complete: the Anglo-Saxons were subjugated to a foreign king.

With the accession of Cnut, social order was restored in Anglo-Saxon England, God's anger appeased and the nation purified. In hindsight, one could say that Æthelred had been given to the English by God as first symptom of His displeasure, and the calamities as well as proposed remedies of his reign were necessary stages towards purging the nation. The peace that followed for the next twenty years is then the divine reward. Both Vikings and King Æthelred were instrumental on several levels: the Vikings as God's punishment, the king as instrument of repentance, and both in combination as instruments to re-model Anglo-Saxon society onto Wulfstan's concept of the Holy Society. Through this very instrumentality the king moved even closer to Christ: as Christ lived and died to rescue all mankind so Æthelred lived and died to rescue all English. The parallels with Scripture are obvious and they enforce notions of Christ-centred kingship. In addition, the unification of the English as a penitent community brought about a clearer understanding of the orders of society and how every member shares in the responsibility of maintaining the realm's wellbeing. Wulfstan's overall efforts to reform his society can be set within an educational frame: his works that bear upon the transformation of king and society can be seen not so much as a *speculum principis* but as a *speculum societatis*.

Ecclesiastical Politics III: From Speculum Principis to Speculum Societatis

The developments and events of the tenth and early eleventh centuries in the domains of kingship and episcopacy brought about redefined ideas of the structure of society and of everyone's place within it, as well as new approaches on how to frame power and authority. The necessity for revision and redefinition of these ideas and approaches was one lesson to be drawn from the disastrous reign of Æthelred and it was the clergy, mainly Ælfric and Wulfstan, that set out to re-model society and educate it according to their ideas of a *populus christianorum*.

The direct involvement of bishops and abbots in the affairs of kingdoms as part of their pastoral duties is based on an understanding of society as a whole in which Church and State complement rather than contradict each other.⁶⁷ The Carolingian realm is a prime example of how the bishops served the kings first and the pope last, and although the pope did not play a prominent role in Anglo-Saxon England, the same is true for Anglo-Saxon bishops: they served their Church by serving their king. The similarities between and indebtedness to Carolingian reformers are exemplified by Wulfstan, who is called '*par excellence* a Carolingian ideologue in his integrated view of a holy people whose kings and bishops worked together to realize the kingdom of God.'⁶⁸ It was the prime duty of the clergy to 'meddle' in state affairs because only they would know what was pleasing to God, and only they owned the key to salvation. It is unsurprising that so many

texts of the later Anglo-Saxon period stress rightful moral conduct and the importance of instruction.⁶⁹

Two of the greatest educators of this period were Ælfric and Wulfstan.⁷⁰ Both clearly perceived the need to begin with educating the clergy before all others, for if the teachers are uneducated they will be of benefit to no one and will thereby imperil the souls of their flock.⁷¹ Indeed, a short passage in *Vercelli Homily 7* attributes a holy dimension to learning:

Butan tweon, lar is haligdomes dæl, & calles swiðost gif hio hyre gymeleste fram adriðeð & ælce gitsunge afyrreð & þyssa woruldlicra þinga lufan gewanige & þæt mod to Godes lufan gehwyrfeð, & gedet þæt hit ealle ða lustfulnessse þysses andweardan lifes onscunað. Soðlice sio lar mid geswince hio sceal þa forenemnedan þing forðbringan.⁷²

Good teaching and education are here understood as the prime remedy against the evils that could befall mankind. The main goal of instruction was to be placed closer to God through the improvement and changes it evokes, which is one stage towards re-modelling the people into Wulfstan's Holy Society.

Within these attempts to transform society into one more pleasing to God and more worthy of His favours, the instruction of the clergy was of crucial importance. Ælfric and Wulfstan alike were very concerned that the current members of the clergy were flawed and in dire need of reform if they were to induce better morals in the people. Wulfstan, in particular, was aware of the many shortcomings of the Anglo-Saxon episcopate, and sought to improve them by constant admonitions.⁷³ In combination with Æthelred's laws on (misbehaving) clergy, these texts also reveal that the clergy were as guilty as the king in provoking divine wrath; the extant corpus of such texts, both by Wulfstan and Ælfric, could be neatly summarised under the heading of *speculum episcoporum/clericorum*. The tenth abuse in Ælfric's translation of Ps.-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis* frames them within the *speculum*-tradition:

Se teoða unþeaw is þæt se bisceop beo gymeleas. *Episcopus* is grecisc nama þæt is on leden *speculator* & on englisc sceawere forþam þe he is geset to þam þæt he ofersceawian sceole mid hys gymene þa læwedan [. . .] Gif se bisceop bið gymeleas þonne he Godes bydel is & to lareowe geset þam læwedum folce þonne losiað fela sawla & he sylf forð mid for his gimeleaste ac þæt folc bið gesælig þurh snotorne bisceop þe him segð Godes lare & healt hy under Gode swa swa good hyrde þæt hi beon gehealdene & he hæbbe þa mede.⁷⁴

The focus on loss and gain of souls recalls the Gelasian statement of the two powers, in particular his notion that the authority of bishops is greater since they carry the responsibility for the souls of man. The episcopate's power of binding and loosing includes the responsibility of keeping souls through teaching, because the bishops will be held accountable not only for the deeds of men but also for how they guarded the souls entrusted to them. The remedy of the ills of society then did not lie primarily with the king but with the bishops, and it was one of Wulfstan's efforts to reform the episcopate and 'create' an episcopal *persona* that would reflect the magnificence and authority of this divine office in his reformed Holy Society.⁷⁵

Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity* reflect this ambition. Of all the texts in the different *Polity* manuscripts, those on the clergy occupy by far the most space and are also more

detailed than those about the king and kingship.⁷⁶ While this compilation is always seen as chiefly a political tract by Wulfstan, it is also primarily an educational manual for the clergy and secondarily one for the rest of society.⁷⁷ These tracts address a wide range of themes: political-theoretical, state-philosophical, advisory and social, to name just a few. They reflect the ecclesiastical initiative to form royal power and they were mainly addressed towards young kings. They do not always contain original thought but they are a conglomerate of synodal decrees, patristic writings, Bible quotations and scriptural exegesis. While these manuals for princes offer advice and guidance, they are also a means of issuing ecclesiastical warnings when the misbehaviour of a king was too apparent. On another level, they reflect the power struggles between clergy and king and mirror the development of political thought.

Apart from Wulfstan's *Polity*, however, there are only few texts from the Anglo-Saxon period that could be loosely categorised as belonging to the *Fürstenspiegel* genre. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* does contain elements of it, and its express purpose of educating King Ceolwulf by relating past deeds can be regarded as instruction. Nevertheless, it was principally a history of the English Church. Similarly, King Alfred's translation of Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis*, particularly chapters ten, seventeen and eighteen, again contains elements of the *speculum* tradition, but it was primarily composed to give guidelines for pastoral care rather than political ideas about rulership. The canons of Archbishop Oda seem like an unfledged version of Wulfstan's *Polity*.⁷⁸ There are also many instances in Old English poetry that refer to proper royal behaviour – the *Maxims* spring to mind – but again there is no concise poetical tract on rulership.⁷⁹ Instead, there are scattered educational references that can be found throughout the extant corpus, beginning with the early instruction of recently Christianised kings as representatives of Christ, the admonitions by Boniface and Alcuin, to the concentrated efforts of the tenth-century reformers culminating in Wulfstan's corpus.

The necessity for the development of the *Fürstenspiegel* genre in the Carolingian empire rather than in Anglo-Saxon England is to be ascribed to the very different political situation of both realms in the ninth century.⁸⁰ The lynchpin of any evaluation of rulership criteria was the *potestas* and *virtus* of the ruler as perceived by his subjects, mainly the nobility and episcopate.⁸¹ *Potestas* 'determined the usefulness, and the quality of usefulness determined in its turn the validity of the royal *nomen*'.⁸² *Virtus* was rather ambivalent in meaning and could refer to a ruler's moral character but also his charisma;⁸³ one could say it referred to the moral qualities of his public *persona*. Ineptitude in these two domains disqualified the ruler from his office which, in the deposition cases of Childeric III and Louis the Pious for example, was made public through the ecclesiastical acts of tonsure and public penance.⁸⁴ As soon as the early Middle Ages, the useless ruler, or 'shadow king', was an established political concept that testified to the realities and dangers of inadequate rulership.⁸⁵ It is no wonder, then, that the episcopate sought to counter such tendencies in their kings with instruction and education, and that we find so many instances of episcopal admonition directed at kings.

The understanding of kings as teachers was rather common, as shown, for example, in the royal styles of the charters; but the understanding that a king must be a student before he can be a teacher seems to have been rare and was thus particularly praiseworthy. Kings Alfred and Edgar readily embraced learning, but unfortunately there are hardly any extant texts that detail the content of royal studies. Wulfstan's *Polity*, for example,

details the demands placed upon the king from which one can infer the contents of royal instruction. In the section on kings, Wulfstan outlines the main royal duties, which focus on protection, strengthening Christendom, obeying religious teachings, and working with the council.⁸⁶ Thus, warfare as well as administrative duties would have formed part of such instruction, but the main focus was on religious education, from which good morals and a sense of justice derived. Here, Wulfstan also stresses the function of the king as educator: ‘And do, swa him þearf is, clænsige his þeode for Gode and for worulde, gif he Godes mildse geearnian wille.’⁸⁷ By being a role model for his people, as well as through ensuring their moral well-being, the king will earn divine favours for himself, but, more importantly, for his kingdom. The exercise of justice was particularly important since every evil was seen to derive from initial injustices on the king’s part.⁸⁸ Justice forms an integral part of the royal reign and of the character of the king:

Be cynedome. Eahta sweras syndon, þe rihtlicne cynedom trumlice upwegað: Soðfæstnys, Modþwærnes, Rumheortnes, Rædfæstnes, *Ueritas, Patientia, Largitas, Persuasibilitas, Egesfulnes, Fyrðringnes, Lihtingnes, Rihtwisnes, Correctio malorum, Exultatio bonorum, Leuitas tributi, Equitas iudicii*. And seofon þing gedafeniað rihtwisum cyninge. An ærest, þæt he swyðe micelne Godes ege hæbbe, and oðer, þæt he æfre rihtwisnesse lufige. And ðridde, þæt he eadmod sy wið gode, and feorðe, þæt he stiðmod sy wið yfele. And fife, þæt he Godes þearfum frefrige and fede. And syxte, þæt he Godes cyrcan fyrðrige and friðige. And seofode, þæt he be freondan and be fremdan fadige gelice on rihtlican dome.⁸⁹

The eight pillars occur at least twice in Carolingian *Fürstenspiegel* texts, in Cathwulf’s letter to Charlemagne and in Sedulius Scottus’ *De Rectoribus Christianis*.⁹⁰ They evoke an architectural interpretation of kingship, quite unlike the body–state metaphor, but with similar implications: if only one part/pillar breaks, the whole structure is condemned to fall and hence unable to exist. This depiction also corresponds to Wulfstan’s conception of society. Each of its parts is interdependent; if only one is flawed, the whole of society is doomed. This becomes even clearer in his understanding of society as consisting of three orders. This concept derives from Ælfric, who elaborates on it in his *Treatise on the Old and New Testament, Maccabees* and a pastoral letter to Wulfstan (although his main concern was to raise arguments against the clerical use of weapons by establishing distinct orders and hence duties for each order).⁹¹ Wulfstan, however, focuses on the need of divine law to fortify each order so that the well-being of the whole realm is ensured:

Be cynestole. Ælc riht cynestol stent on þrym stapelum, þe fullice ariht stent. An is Oratores, and oðer is Laboratores, and ðridde is Bellatores. Oratores sindon gebedmen, þe Gode sculan þeowian and dæges and nihtes for ealne þeodscipe þingian georne. Laboratores sindon weorcmen, þe tilian sculon, þæs ðe eall þeodscype big sceall libban. Bellatores syndon wigmen, þe eard sculon werian wiglice mid wæpnum. On þyssum ðrym stapelum sceall ælc cynestol standan mid rihte on cristenre þeode. And awacie heora ænig, sona se stol scylfð, and fulberste heora ænig, þonne hrysð se stol nyðer, and þæt wyrð þære þeode eall to unþearfe. Ac stapelige man and strange and trumme hi georne mid wislicre Godes lare and mid rihtlicre woruldage, þæt wyrð þam þeodscype to langsuman ræde. And soð is, þæt ic secge, awacie se cristenom, sona scylfð se cynedom, and arære man unlaga ahwar on lande oððe unsida lufige ahwar to swiðe, þæt cymð þære þeode eall to unþearfe. Ac do man, swa hit þearf is, alegege man unriht and rære up Godes riht, þæt mæg to þearfe for Gode and for worulde, Amen.⁹²

The society promulgated here is Christian, and all means to ensure its continuity and safety derive from divine law. The ultimate means for the salvation of any society has to be sought in Christianity which permeates every area. A strict division between the secular and religious spheres is then a possible danger to social well-being. The emphasis on ‘for God and for worulde’ is not so much an indication of a growing separation between the two,⁹³ but rather an acknowledgement that only the service of both realms will enable the people to achieve unity and prosperity. All efforts must be directed towards maintaining both spheres, not just one or the other, with each order working in their respective sphere towards the improvement of the whole society. This again corresponds to Wulfstan’s attempt to reform the English people into a Holy Society. Only the acknowledgment of the duties and responsibilities of each member and order can promote prosperity of the realm, which thus depended on each member knowing his proper place and function.⁹⁴ The innovative idea is hence that it is not just the king or the episcopate that hold the fate of the realm in their hands, but rather the whole corporate body of the English. Just as they are all responsible for the miseries brought onto them by God, they are all responsible for the divine favours bestowed unto them. The architectural structures Wulfstan imposed on ‘his’ society also testify to his efforts to order a chaotic society; structures imply clear rules and regulations which everyone can live by and so contribute to the general welfare. As such, the *Polity* can be rightly regarded as a *speculum societatis*.

Conclusion

The prominent characters of the tenth and early eleventh centuries influenced, in their unique way, Anglo-Saxon concepts of kingship. The Benedictine Reform movement offered a singular opportunity for churchmen to increase their authority over kings, but it also showed how much such efforts were indebted to a king willing enough to support them. Eadwig serves as an example of a king who does not tolerate any encroachment upon his royal authority, while Edgar welcomed episcopal input. Oswald, Æthelwold and Dunstan were then able to channel Edgar’s interest towards their attempts to restore the splendour of the Anglo-Saxon church. During Æthelred’s reign, the efforts of archbishop Wulfstan were relentless in trying to improve a dire situation but, as history teaches us, they were futile. The juxtaposition of both Edgar’s and Æthelred’s reigns was intended to show a path towards re-modelling society into one pleasing to God. The many treatises focus on how this could be achieved by, crucially, including the whole of society. Concepts of rulership and society thus move closer together towards the late medieval understanding of society as one body.⁹⁵

The ecclesiastical transformation of rulership owed much to the historical circumstances of the tenth and early eleventh centuries. It resulted in a deeper connection not only between the ecclesiastical and secular spheres, but also between all levels of society. Edgar’s support of the reform movement not only led to a focus on the king as protector of churches, but also allowed the episcopate to re-model the king according to their particular ideas. Furthermore, the alleged weaknesses of Æthelred and the miseries of his reign allowed for a transformation of society as a whole, not just the king. The three-day penance was a ritual of national purging and cleansing that would enable the people to return to the state of baptismal grace and so regain divine favour. It also permitted the Anglo-Saxon

people to emerge as a spiritually clean *populus Christianorum*, the very imprint of Wulfstan's Holy Society. The chaotic condition of society during the later years of Æthelred's reign also called for renewed attempts to educate the people according to Christian ideas of morals and behaviour. Within this frame, Wulfstan managed to realise his concept of a structured society consisting of interdependent members with shared responsibilities and duties. The king remains at the centre with his overall duties of protection and justice, but it is the communal effort that would ensure the welfare of the realm and continuous divine favours. However, what has also become apparent is that when the king fails, the Church, and especially the episcopate, was called upon to fill his place which in turn necessitates a morally flawless clergy.⁹⁶ Many of Wulfstan's texts were directed at the king, and thus they were the prime means to transform him according to the ecclesiastical understanding of kingship. Edgar was deliberately and emphatically cast as *vicarius Christi* and later Æthelred was called *Cristes geseþelia*. Both denote an enforced concept of Christ-centred kingship which would find its ultimate expression in the coronation rituals of the late Anglo-Saxon kings.

Notes

- ¹ John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 292–341.
- ² The letter dates from c.924 x 926; EHD I no. 228; it is in William of Malmesbury's *De Gestis Pontificum* (Hamilton ed., 399f).
- ³ EHD I no. 228; 'sancte exaltor ecclesiae, gentilitatis humiliator pravae, regni tui speculum, totius bonitatis exemplum, dissipator hostium, pater clericorum, adiutor egentium, amator omnium sanctorum, invocator angelorum [. . .]' (Malmesbury, *Gestis*, 400)
- ⁴ David Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 185–205; see also pp. 141–171 on Athelstan.
- ⁵ The reform movement will not be discussed here; cf. studies by Knowles, *Monastic Order*, esp. 31–69; more recent Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 341–367; Joyce Hill, 'The Benedictine Reform and Beyond', in Philip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (eds.), *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 151–169; Julia Barrow, 'The Chronology of the Benedictine "Reform"', in Donald Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959–975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 211–223; Alexander R. Rumble, 'The Laity and the Monastic Reform in the Reign of Edgar', in Scragg, *Edgar*, pp. 242–251; Cubitt discusses the three recent volumes on Æthelwold, Dunstan and Oswald in regard to the Benedictine Reform ('Review Article: The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England', *Early Medieval Europe* 6 [1997], pp. 77–94); Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks and Tim Tatton-Brown (eds.), *St Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992); Barbara Yorke (ed.), *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1988); and Nicholas Brooks and Catherine E. Cubitt (eds.), *St. Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996).
- ⁶ But see D. J. Dales, 'The Spirit of the *Regularis Concordia* and the Hand of St Dunstan', in Ramsay et al., *St Dunstan*, pp. 45–56, and Harald Kleinschmidt, 'Die Titulaturen englischer Könige im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert', in Herwig Wolfram and Anton Scharer (eds.), *Intitulatio III: Lateinische Herrschertitel und Herrschertitulaturen vom siebten bis zum dreizehnten Jahrhundert*. MIOG-Ergänzungsband 29 (Wien: Böhlau, 1988), pp. 75–130.
- ⁷ For Wulfstan, see further below; for art as expression of ruler transformation, see chapter 5.
- ⁸ E.g., S 876, 885, 891 and 893.

- ⁹ See Ramsey et al., *St Dunstan*, Yorke, *Bishop Æthelwold*, and Brooks and Cubitt, *St Oswald*, Scragg, *Edgar*; for Eadwig, see Shashi Jayakumar, 'Eadwig and Edgar: Politics, Propaganda, Faction', in Scragg, *Edgar*, pp. 83–103, and Frederick Biggs, 'Edgar's Path to the Throne', in Scragg, *Edgar*, pp. 124–139.
- ¹⁰ For accounts on their youths, see Wulfstan's *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*, ch. 6 and 7; Ælfric's *Life of St Æthelwold*, ch. 4 and 5 (EHD I no. 235); B's *Life of St Dunstan*, ch. 5 (EHD I no. 234); in scholarship: D. A. Bullough, 'St Oswald: Monk, Bishop and Archbishop', in Brooks and Cubitt, *St Oswald*, pp. 1–22; Barbara Yorke, 'Æthelwold and the Politics of the Tenth Century', in Yorke, *Bishop Æthelwold*, pp. 65–88; Nicholas Brooks, 'The Career of St Dunstan', in Ramsay, Sparks and Tatton-Brown, *St Dunstan*, pp. 1–23.
- ¹¹ EHD I no. 234, ch. 21.
- ¹² See Yorke, *Æthelwold and Politics*, pp. 74–79; Andrew Wareham, 'St Oswald: Family and Kin', in Brooks and Cubitt, *St Oswald*, pp. 46–63; Brooks, *Career of St Dunstan*, pp. 14–18; Jayakumar, *Eadwig and Edgar*, pp. 88–100; Simon Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Athelred the Unready* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 48–70 (focusing on the year 956).
- ¹³ EHD I no. 234, ch. 19.
- ¹⁴ See Keynes, *Diplomas*, p. 48 and 'The "Dunstan B" Charters', *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994), pp. 165–193, here pp. 185f, for Dunstan conducting royal business during Eadred's illness.
- ¹⁵ See Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 48–70 for Eadwig's charters of 956.
- ¹⁶ C.P. Lewis, 'Edgar, Chester, and the Kingdom of the Mercians, 957–9', p. 106, in Scragg, *Edgar*, pp. 104–123.
- ¹⁷ See Yorke, *Æthelwold and Politics*, p. 75.
- ¹⁸ ASC B, C s.a. 957; ASC D, F s.a. 955 states that upon Eadred's death, Eadwig succeeded to the West Saxon kingdom and Edgar to the Mercian one. The actual reasons for this division range from a Mercian bid (even conspiracy) for freedom under a new king to a late instance of the early Anglo-Saxon feature of joint kingship. See Biggs (*Edgar's Path to the Throne*, pp. 124–139) for the idea of joint kingship; see also Brooks, *Career of St Dunstan*, pp. 19f.
- ¹⁹ Anonymous, *Account on King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries*, 146: 'the ignorance of childhood.' (this text is now attributed to Æthelwold).
- ²⁰ Byrhtferth's *Vita Oswaldi* I.2: 'immoderate youth'.
- ²¹ *Chronicon* IV.8: 'He held the kingdom continuously for four years, and deserved to be loved.'
- ²² Ælfric's *Life of St Æthelwold*, ch. 12–15; Wulfstan's *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*, ch. 16–18; Anonymous, *Account on King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries*, 149ff; ASC A 964.
- ²³ C&S no. 29.
- ²⁴ Anonymous Old English *Account on King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries* (C&S, 149f: 'Edgar was greatly gladdened by that spiritual beginning with monks [i.e. the monastic life as reformed by Dunstan at Glastonbury], and began eagerly to inquire first of all how he could rectify his own life with true piety. It is also written in books: "He who plans to begin a good work, let him make a beginning with himself" [Lk 4:23]. After he had been amended himself he began zealously to set monasteries in order widely throughout his kingdom, and to set up the service of God. By the supporting grace of God, it was performed thus: he availed himself continually of the counsel of his archbishop, Dunstan; through his admonition he constantly inquired about the salvation of his soul, and not that alone, but likewise about all the religion and welfare of his dominion.'
- ²⁵ For Alfred, see his preface to the *Cura Pastoralis* and Asser, ch. 106. See also Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Longman, 1998).
- ²⁶ In line with the arguments as brought forward in chapter 2 on how charters are perceived as being close to God, the ratification of the eviction on parchment links it explicitly and directly to the Divine and hence legitimises it as a royal Christian deed.
- ²⁷ Some leaves may have been accidentally or deliberately lost, especially if the listed lands did not accord with later claims. See C&S no. 31 (120 n. 1) and Sean Miller (ed.), *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 110.
- ²⁸ For a discussion of the frontispiece, see ch. 5.

²⁹ Miller, *New Minster Charters*, p. 107.

³⁰ S 745: 'Because they had been of no benefit to me with their intercessory prayers, but rather, as the blessed Gregory said, they had 'provoked the vengeance of Just judge' they who were contaminated with diverse blemishes of vices' (trsl. Alexander Rumble, *Property and Piety in Early Medieval Winchester: Documents Relating the Topography of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman City and its Minsters*. Winchester Studies 4.3 [Oxford: Clarendon, 2002], p. 81). Interestingly, the word *uariis* is the expunged result of *uicariis* (ibid.).

³¹ S 745: 'XV. Moreover, let the abbot, girded with spiritual arms, defended on all sides by a troop of monks, drenched with the dew of celestial gifts, conquering the phantom-like tricks of devils, skilfully defending with a sword of the spirit, protecting with the subtle shield of faith as a defence, fighting in hardy triumph as an undaunted soldier, snatch the king and all the clergy of his kingdom from the rabid persecution of invisible enemies, with the help of Christ, through whose power they contend. [...] XVI. In like manner, the earthly king, strengthening the camp of the Celestial King with the strongest fortification, conquering visible adversaries with worldly arms and bringing the frenzy of barbarous enemies to nought, by casting them down, protect his Creator's pastures and flock with careful watch, unconquerable, so that, coming to the reward of life, he, rejoicing, might enjoy eternal blessings which neither any human eye has been able to see nor to which the heart of man has risen in any respect, which God has prepared for those who love Him' (trsl. Rumble, *Winchester Studies*, pp. 88f).

³² *Regularis Concordia*: 'Thus, in fulfilment of his royal office, even as the Good Shepherd, he carefully rescued and defended from the savage open mouths of the wicked – as it were the gaping jaws of wolves – those sheep which by God's grace he had diligently gathered together. And he saw to it wisely that his Queen, Aelfthrith, should be the protectress and fearless guardian of the communities of nuns; so that he himself helping the men and his consort helping the women there should be no cause for any breath of scandal' (trsl. Symons, *The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation* [London: Nelson, 1953], p. 2). See also Dales, *Spirit of the Regularis Concordia*, p. 48.

³³ *Regularis Concordia* ch. 8, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25 and 27. Cf. also charters that require intercessions for a land grant, e.g. some of Athelstan's charters S 419, 422, 423 and 429.

³⁴ See also Dales, *Spirit of the Regularis Concordia*, pp. 51f.

³⁵ IV Edgar prologue: '[Here it is made known in this document how] King Edgar inquired what could be a remedy in the sudden pestilence which greatly oppressed and reduced his people far and wide throughout his dominion' (trsl. EHD I no. 41). Cf. also ASC A s.a. 962.

³⁶ IV Edgar § 1: 'First, namely, that it seemed to him and his counsellors that a calamity of this kind was merited by sins and by contempt of God's commands, and especially by the withholding of the tribute which Christian men ought to render to God in their tithes' (trsl. EHD I no. 41). Cf. also *Blickling Homily IV*.

³⁷ Catherine Cubitt, 'Archbishop Dunstan: a Prophet in Politics?', p. 145, in Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham (eds.), *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicolas Brooks* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 145–166.

³⁸ Miller, *New Minster Charters*, pp. 108f; Dales, *Spirit of the Regularis Concordia*, p. 45. For the influence of Æthelwold and Dunstan on Edgar's royal styles, see Kleinschmidt, *Titulaturen englischer Könige*, pp. 75–130. Much more could be said about the political dealings of Oswald, Dunstan and Æthelwold, but since the focus of this section is the ruler transformation, references to the relevant articles shall suffice: see Yorke, *Æthelwold and Politics*, pp. 65–88; Cubitt, *Archbishop Dunstan: A Prophet in Politics?*, pp. 145–166; Bullough, *St Oswald*, pp. 1–22; Dorothy Whitelock, 'The Appointment of Dunstan as Archbishop of Canterbury', in Whitelock, *History, Law and Literature in Tenth- to Eleventh-Century England* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981) Essay IV, pp. 233–247 (original pagination).

³⁹ Kleinschmidt, *Titulaturen englischer Könige*, p. 125.

⁴⁰ This stain on the king is hard to erase even in modern scholarship and regardless of new research that modifies this dim view on Æthelred. See, e.g., M. K. Lawson ('Archbishop Wulfstan and the

Homiletic Element in the Laws of Æthelred II and Cnut', *English Historical Review* 107 [1992] pp. 565–586) who throughout refers to him as a 'failure'. It is due to the efforts of scholars like Pauline Stafford and Simon Keynes that Æthelred's reputation has been restored, at least in part, and that his reign has come to be evaluated in a broader context of circumstances. See, e.g., Stafford, 'The Reign of Æthelred II, a Study in the Limitations on Loyal Policy and Action', in David Hill (ed.), *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*. BAR British Series, 59 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 15–46; Stafford, 'Political Ideas in Late Tenth-Century England: Charters as Evidence', in Pauline Stafford, Janet L. Nelson and Jane Martindale (eds.), *Law, Laity and Solidarities. Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 68–82; Keynes, 'The Declining Reputation of King Æthelred the Unready', in Hill, *Ethelred the Unready*, pp. 227–253; Ryan Lavelle, *Æthelred II: King of the English, 978–1016* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002); and Levi Roach, *Æthelred the Unready* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), esp. ch. 5–6.

⁴¹ See, for example, Ælfric, *Life of St Swithun*, ll. 1–3 and 443–453 and his *Epilogue*, ll. 78–87. A certain amount of nostalgia is visible in these accounts.

⁴² Alcuin: Ep. 16 and 18 (to Æthelred of Northumbria) 108 (to King Eardwulf of Northumbria); Alfred: *Pastoral Care*, accompanying letter to Wærferht.

⁴³ This event can be interpreted either as ultimate punishment or as ultimate purge.

⁴⁴ For the Vikings as divine instrument, see Simon Coupland, 'The Rod of God's Wrath or the People of God's Wrath? The Carolingian Theology of the Viking Invasions', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42 (1991), pp. 535–554, although he focuses on the Viking attacks in France of the ninth century.

⁴⁵ 'Alas! Alas! What exceedingly bitter and what bad times have come about in our days, on account of our sins, since almost every rank of the English people – stained not only with the aforementioned depravities but also with various other sins, for a long time provoking Christ to wrath – now gets what it has deserved. And because (the people) had ignored the Lord's law and precepts in every respect, and had disparaged the warnings of learned men, therefore it is being oppressed, more than all the nations of the earth, by disasters and by innumerable attacks and by the assaults of enemies. Nor indeed after the first arrival of the English has their country endured so many and such unheard of dangers as it now suffers, groaning. But the people had often given such a vast amount of money for the liberty of the kingdom that scarcely in any way will the country now recover its former wealth. What more can one say? By what great evils the people have been oppressed, and by what great disturbances, namely by war, famine, fire and slaughter, how many thousands of people without number have been killed, how many captives scattered indiscriminately throughout various regions – there is no tongue which might express either the measure or the number' (transl. Simon Keynes, 'An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006–7 and 1009–12', *Anglo-Saxon England* 36 [2007], pp. 151–220, here pp. 174f.). This text was copied by Wulfstan into his collection.

⁴⁶ Keynes, *An Abbot, an Archbishop and the Viking Raids*, pp. 165ff, and Mary Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', pp. 82f, in Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (eds.), *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*. King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies (Exeter: Short Run Press, 2000), pp. 65–88.

⁴⁷ Ælfric SupplHom 22: 'Historians, who wrote about kings, tell us that the old kings of ancient times thought how they might ease their duty, because one man cannot be everywhere and bear everything, although he has the power/authority. So the kings placed, as a help to themselves, ealdormen under them, and they often send them to many battles, as it is written in the heathen books as well as in the Bible; and the ealdormen had conquered the attacking enemy, about which we will give some examples from the Latin book, so that no one may contradict us. [Examples about David's thane Sibba, Constantine's thane Gallicanus and Gratianus' thane Theodosius follow.] We may make a longsome tale about this, if we want to say all that the books tell us, from which wisdom and guidance may come to us, on how often the triumphant army leaders were sent to many fights as protection of their people; and the kings stayed at home occupied with other occupations for the benefit of their people' (transl. K.McC.).

- ⁴⁸ ASC 1016 (C, D, E). This could be interpreted, in turn, as the soldiers' understanding of the treacherous nature of Eadric and others which they sought to counter with the presence of king which then might have stopped his generals from avoiding battle and fightless submissions.
- ⁴⁹ For the corporate body politic, see Anton-Herman Chroust, 'The Corporate Idea and the Body Politic in the Middle Ages', *The Review of Politics* 9 (1947), pp. 423–452; for Holy Society, see Patrick Wormald, 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder', in Matthew Townend (ed.), *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York: Proceedings from the Second Alcuin Conference*. Studies in the Early Middle Ages 10 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), pp. 9–27; and *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century. Vol.1: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 416–429.
- ⁵⁰ Wormald, *Making of English Law*, pp. 416–429.
- ⁵¹ Wormald, *Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State-Builder*, p. 21.
- ⁵² See e.g. III Æthelred § 2 (witnesses), § 8 (moneyers); V Æthelred § 2 (human trafficking), §§ 4–9 (clergy), § 10 (subjection of Church) §§ 12–16 (festival days), §§ 22–28 (Christian duties); VIII Æthelred §§ 1–5 (violation of Church sanctuary), §§ 19–31 (clergy), §§ 36–39 (deterioration of laws and justice).
- ⁵³ Latin Sermon no. 12 *On Conversion and Repentance and Communion*: 'You see, we are now fallen and completely incapable of standing. We lie prostrate, weighed down by sins. But the one who created us upright still longs for us to rise up. In fact he opens up his compassion to us and seeks to receive us through repentance. But we cannot repent properly if we don't understand how to repent. Repentance involves both lamenting the wicked things we have done and never again doing those things that we claim to be sorry for when we repent. If you deplore your actions but continue to perform them, then you don't know how to repent.[. . .] We read in the Gospel about his wisdom of the serpent, and there are those who say that when a serpent comes to drink at a fountain it first spits out all its venom. The same is true of you as a Christian: when you approach the altar to receive communion, you spit out the venom of the malice of your sins and relinquish whatever ill will you have against another and give a pure confession to God and his priest and turn to God with all your heart and repent of all your sins, and then you will be able to receive holy communion confidently with a pure mind and a free conscience, leading not to judgement but a remedy' (trsl. Thomas Hall, 'Wulfstan's Latin Sermons', in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 93–139, here pp. 129–131).
- ⁵⁴ The issuing of the *Agnus Dei* coinage belongs here as well, but cannot be addressed any further. See Keynes, *An Abbot, an Archbishop and the Viking Raids*, pp. 190–201.
- ⁵⁵ See Keynes, *An Abbot, an Archbishop and the Viking Raids*, pp. 182–184.
- ⁵⁶ The deposition of Louis the Pious comes to mind; according to the bishops involved: 'We have taken (the bishops say in October 833) great care to make clear to him (Lothar) and his barons as well as to the whole people how great the strength and power and the office of the bishops is and what sort of damning punishment awaits him who is unwilling to obey sacerdotal admonitions' (MGH LL Capit II no. 197, 52; trsl. in Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*. The Birkbeck Lectures 1968–69 [London: Methuen, 1969], p. 69). See also Janet Nelson, 'Bad Kingship in the Earlier Middle Ages', *Haskins Society Journal* 8 (1999), pp. 1–26. Bishops were comparatively weak in Anglo-Saxon England and did not declare kings unfit to rule on religious grounds. Only two Anglo-Saxon kings were subjected to declarations of anathema by popes: King Ecgrith by Pope Agatho (for his quarrels with Wilfrid; AD 677) and Eadberht Præn of Kent by Pope Leo III in 798. See also Konrad Bund, *Thronsturz und Herrscherabsetzung im Frühmittelalter* (Bonn: Röhrscheid, 1979), for a comprehensive analysis.
- ⁵⁷ *Sermo Lupi* l. 71: 'and Æþelred mon dræfde ut of his earde' (only in Bethurum 20.1).
- ⁵⁸ CH I.14 *Palm Sunday*: 'We will say to you a parable. No man may make himself a king, for the people have the option to choose him for king who is agreeable to them: but after that he has been hallowed as king, he has power over the people, and they may not shake his yoke from their neck' (trsl. Benjamin Thorpe, *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: The First Part, Containing the Sermones Catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric*, 2 Vols. [London: Printed for the Ælfric Society, 1843–1846], Vol. I, pp. 212f).

- ⁵⁹ But see Godden who interprets this passage rather as general statement than actual comment on Æthelred's reign ('Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon Kingship', *English Historical Review* 102 [1987], pp. 911–915).
- ⁶⁰ Dorothy Bethurum Loomis, 'Regnum and Sacerdotium in the Early Eleventh Century', p. 134, in Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (eds.), *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 129–145.
- ⁶¹ Wormald, 'Æthelred the Lawmaker', p. 75f, in Hill, *Ethelred*, pp. 47–80.
- ⁶² VIII Æthelred 2.1: 'For a Christian king is Christ's deputy in a Christian people, and he must avenge very zealously offences against Christ' (trsl. EHD I no. 46).
- ⁶³ Wormald, *Making of English Law*, p. 429.
- ⁶⁴ Alice Cowen, 'Byrastas and bysmeras: The Wounds of Sin in the *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*', pp. 405ff, in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 397–411.
- ⁶⁵ Cowen, *Wounds of Sin*, p. 410.
- ⁶⁶ *Sermo Lupi* ll. 176–185: 'There was a historian in the times of the Britons, called Gildas, who wrote about their misdeeds, how with their sins they angered God so excessively that finally he allowed the army of the English to conquer their land and to destroy the host of the Britons entirely. And that came about, according to what he said, through robbery by the powerful, and through the coveting of ill-gotten gains, through the lawlessness of the people and through unjust judgments, through the sloth of the bishops and the wicked cowardice of God's messengers, who mumbled with their jaws where they should have cried aloud; also through the foul wantonness of the people and through gluttony and manifold sins they destroyed their country and themselves they perished' (Bethurum 20.3; trsl. EHD I no. 240).
- ⁶⁷ See Mary F. Giandrea for the episcopal *servitium regis* (*Episcopal Culture in Late Anglo-Saxon England* [Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007], ch. 2).
- ⁶⁸ Wormald, *Making of English Law*, p. 465.
- ⁶⁹ Such texts can be found in the earlier period, too, but their appearance is far more condensed in the later period which suggests a feeling of urgency and renewed vigour.
- ⁷⁰ On Ælfric as teacher, see Thomas Hall, 'Ælfric as Pedagogue', in Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan (eds.), *A Companion to Ælfric* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 193–216; on Wulfstan's ideas of reform and hence education, see, e.g., Joyce Hill, 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Reformer?', in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 209–224; for their relationship, see Malcolm Godden, 'Relations of Wulfstan and Ælfric', in Townend, *Wulfstan*, pp. 353–374.
- ⁷¹ (. . . and all fall into the pit; Matt. 15.14) See e.g. Ælfric, CH I.17 (*Second Sunday after Easter*), Wulfstan, *Homilies* (Napier 55, 57 and 58) and *Cena Domini* (Bethurum 15), anon. In *Letania Maiore*, anon. *Monday in Rogationtide* and *Vercelli Homily 9*.
- ⁷² ll. 1–5: 'Without a doubt, learning is part of holiness, and most of all, if learning banishes neglect, removes each greedy desire, diminishes the love of worldly things, turns the heart to the love of God, and brings to pass that we shun all evil desires of this present life. Truly, learning with toil must bring forth the aforementioned things' (trsl. Lewis Nicholson, *The Vercelli Book Homilies: Translations from the Anglo-Saxon* [Lanham and London: University Press of America, 1991], p. 57).
- ⁷³ Wulfstan's texts are *Episcopus*, *Polity Ecclesiastical* (including those texts that can be found in three of the mss. but do not directly belong to the Polity itself, see Karl Jost [ed.] *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical': ein Werk Erzbischof Wulfstans von York*. Schweizer anglistische Arbeiten 47 [Bern: Francke, 1959]), *Be Bishephadum* (Bethurum 17), items in his canon law collection, as well as the remarks in his homilies as cited in n. 86.
- ⁷⁴ ll. 253–268: 'The tenth abuse is that the bishop be negligent. "Episcopus" is a Greek word which is "speculator" in Latin and in English "watchman", because he is appointed so that he oversees the laymen with care, [. . .] If the bishop is negligent although he is God's preacher and set to teach the lay folk, then he loses many souls and he himself hence with them because of his negligence; but that nation is prosperous through a wise bishop who tells them God's teachings

and who holds them under God just as a good shepherd, that they be protected and he has the reward' (trsl. K.McC.).

⁷⁵ Similarly, Giandrea, *Episcopal Culture*, pp. 38–41.

⁷⁶ According to Jost's edition. See also Wormald, *Making of English Law*, pp. 458f.

⁷⁷ According to Anton, the definition of *Fürstenspiegel* or mirror of princes is: 'A *Fürstenspiegel* is a paraenetically intended composition, directed towards a king, prince or regent as person or toward a (fictive) official as representative of a social group. It has to be an independent work or a self-contained part within a greater context. The paraenesis can be expressed as immediate admonition for the constitution of the ruling ethics and administration, furthermore, in reference to the recipient, toward the discussion of state-theoretical and socio-theoretical contexts. It can refer to the person and office of the ruler, in a wider scope to the existing and comprehensive political and clerical organisations. The precise localisation of the texts is between 'what is' and 'what ought to be', and, in common with the aforementioned theoretical works, they deal with political ethics' (*Fürstenspiegel des frühen und hohen Mittelalters*. Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 45 [Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2006], pp. 3f, trsl. K.McC.). D. Bethurum Loomis calls the *Polity* a kind of estates literature, a *norma recte vivendi* (*Regnum and Sacerdotium*, p. 129).

⁷⁸ Oda's *Constitutions* are in C&S no. 20; a translation is provided by John Johnson, *A Collection of the Laws and Canons of the Church of England From its First Foundation to the Conquest, and From the Conquest to the Reign of King Henry VIII. Vol. I* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1850), pp. 358–365.

⁷⁹ For political thought in poetry, see, for example, studies by Jos Bazelmans, *By Weapons made Worthy: Lords, Retainers and their Relationship in 'Beowulf'* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam UP, 199), and 'Beyond Power. Ceremonial Exchanges in *Beowulf*', in Franz Theuvs and Janet L. Nelson (eds.), *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 311–375, Jayne Carroll, 'Engla Waldend, Rex Admirabilis: Poetic Representations of King Edgar', *Review of English Studies* 58 (2007), pp. 113–32; Stephen Glosecki, 'Beowulf and the Queen's Cup: Determining the Danish Succession', in Jonathan Wilcox and Hugh Magennis (eds.), *The Power of Words: Anglo-Saxon Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg on his Seventieth Birthday* (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2006), pp. 368–398; and Paul Beekman Taylor, 'The Language of Sacral Kingship in *Beowulf*', *Studia Neophilologica* 66 (1994), pp. 129–45.

⁸⁰ According to Karl Morrison, there are nine surviving formal works from the eighth and ninth centuries that can be classified as *Fürstenspiegel*: Cathwulf's letter to Charlemagne (c.775); Alcuin's *De Rhetorica* (801–804); Smaragdus of St-Mihiel's treatise *Via Regia* (811–814); Jonas of Orléans' *De Institutione Regia – Admonitio* (831); Sedulius Scottus' *Liber de Rectoribus Christianis* (855–858); Hincmar of Rheims' *De Regis Persona et Regio Ministerio* (873); *Admonitio ad Episcopos et ad Regem Karlomannum and De Ordine Palatii* (both 882); and an anonymous revised version of a Merovingian letter (late ninth century/early tenth century) (*The Two Kingdoms: Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964], pp. 10f n. 14).

⁸¹ Janet Nelson explores the misdemeanours and misconduct of early medieval Carolingian kings within the concepts of useless and tyrannical kings (*Bad Kingship*, pp. 1–26). Similarly, Edward Peters analyses the development of the *rex inutilis* concept from Pippin's usurpation of the Merovingian throne up to the high Middle Ages, but does not even mention Anglo-Saxon rulers (*The Shadow King: 'Rex Inutilis' in Medieval Law and Literature, 751–1327* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970]).

⁸² Peters, *Shadow King*, p. 47.

⁸³ Peters, *Shadow King*, pp. 22f.

⁸⁴ Peters, *Shadow King*, pp. 59f.

⁸⁵ This type of useless king was entered into Canon law by Pope Innocence IV in 1245 (Peters, *Shadow King*, p. 20). A reaction to such inadequate Anglo-Saxon rulership is Wulfstan's homily on evil rulers (Bethurum 21).

⁸⁶ *Polity*, ch. 4–20 (Be eorðlicum cyninge).

⁸⁷ *Polity*, ch. 15 (Be eorðlicum cyninge): ‘And he [the king] do, what he shall: to cleanse his people for God and the world, if he wants to earn God’s mercy’ (trsl. K.McC.)

⁸⁸ See, e.g., the ninth abuse in Ælfric’s homily *De Abusivis*.

⁸⁹ *Polity*, ch. 23–30 (Be cynedome): ‘About the royal reign. There are eight pillars, which firmly support the righteous royal reign: truth and patience and generosity and wisdom and intimidation [of evil-doers] and furtherance [of the good] and lightness of taxation and justice. And there are seven things that befit a righteous king: first of all, that he is very God-fearing, and second, that he loves justice, and third, that he be benevolent towards the good, and fourth, that he be strict towards the bad, and fifth, that he always consoles and feeds God’s poor, and sixth, that he supports and protects God’s church, and seventh, that he judges friend or stranger with equal judgement’ (trsl. K.McC.).

⁹⁰ For Cathwulf’s letter, see Joanne Story, ‘Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis’, *Speculum* 74 (1999), pp. 1–21. Sedulius Scottus, *De Rectoribus Christianis*, ch. 10.

⁹¹ Timothy Powell, ‘The “Three Orders” of Society in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Anglo-Saxon England* 23 (1994), pp. 103–132, here pp. 110–121; Wormald, *Making of English Law*, pp. 459–463.

⁹² *Polity*, ch. 31–40 (Be cynestole): ‘About the royal throne. Each legal royal throne, standing truly aright, stands on three pillars: one is called “oratores”, the other “bellatores” and the third “laboratores”. The “oratores” are men of prayer who shall serve God and intercede day and night for all people. The “laboratores” are workers who shall produce on what all people shall live. The “bellatores” are soldiers who shall defend their country, warlike with weapons. Each royal throne shall stand upon these three pillars with right within a Christian people. And if one of them weakens, soon the throne sways, and if one of them breaks, the throne falls, a damage to the whole nation. But to strengthen, to fortify and to steady them eagerly with wise divine law, therein lies the constant benefit for the people. And true is what I say, if Christendom is weakened, soon the kingdom sways, and if anywhere in the country justice is ill-used or bad habits are loved too much, all this harms the country. But to do what is necessary is of benefit for God and the world. Amen’ (trsl. K.McC.).

⁹³ Loomis, *Regnum and Sacerdotium*, p. 137.

⁹⁴ Loomis, *Regnum and Sacerdotium*, p. 129.

⁹⁵ Cf. Chroust, *Corporate Idea and the Body Politic*, pp. 423–452.

⁹⁶ Loomis, *Regnum and Sacerdotium*, p. 139.

Rituals of King-making

The complex rituals of royal consecration, anointing and coronation are the ultimate expression of the ecclesiastical transformation of kingship. The liturgical character of this ritual complex, the increasing involvement of the episcopacy, and the religious reconfiguration and re-interpretation of king-making bestow a distinct sacral character onto the king, not only during the ceremonies of his institution but throughout his whole reign. This sacrality, however, developed into a contested issue between king and episcopacy as it theoretically imparted authority over the episcopacy. The anointing ritual, in particular, reflected this ongoing debate and was adapted in such a way as to deny any ecclesiastical status to the king. The development of these rituals parallels the development in early medieval political thought: the more both spheres were defined and delineated from each other, and the more each sphere asserted its authority, the more these rituals were used to confer a specific understanding of kingship and also to subject the king to the religious sphere.

Within this process, the ritual as an act in itself was refined and endowed with layers of symbolic meaning. From simple ruler acclamations to day-long ceremonies, rituals developed to incorporate the needs of society and the requirements of circumstances. The reference to traditions or to ancestors within the context of the ceremony, for example, bestowed a legitimacy onto the future king that was publicly displayed for everyone to see and so could not be denied nor revoked. Rituals were used to maintain social relationships by adding stability, security and continuity within social life.¹ The recourse to the past imparts timelessness through its inclusion of participants in a wider framework of society and history, thereby adding, in a religious sense, a teleological aspect. The specific course of a ritual re-introduced the past into the present and thereby authorised and legitimised the current reign. They are ‘social dramas’: ‘an event, a set of activities that does not simply express cultural values or enact symbolic scripts but actually effects changes in people’s perceptions and interpretations’.² The social drama of king-making and kingship is enacted within the micro-cosmos of the inauguration rituals, and issues of rulership are played out here: hierarchies are determined, rights and duties are established, loyalty towards a certain person is asserted and matters of superiority and authority are ascertained.³ This drama reflects the realities of kingship on the macro-cosmic level: ‘rites create political reality. It is by participating in rituals that people identify with larger

political forces that can only be seen in symbolic form.⁴ The manifold facets of the ritual, then, confer a specific intent and meaning onto the ceremony and its participants by symbolically expressing certain ideas and concepts, and creating a ritual reality that will eventually frame future events.

The contemporary descriptions of rituals were recipient-centred, a fact that has to be taken into account in their analysis. The term 'virtual ritual' denotes a type of ritualistic communication that is adjusted to the specific needs of a certain audience, usually in a written report of events.⁵ The comparison of two narratives of the same event, the papal coronation of Pippin in 754, for example, suggests that their compilers adapted the course of events as well as their meaning to their intended audience, thereby depicting their own party in as favourable a light as possible. The people in Rome could not be told that the pope humbled himself in front of Pippin, while the people in Francia needed this papal subjection to accept the legitimacy of the new ruler.⁶ The increasing ecclesiastical involvement – indeed, one could call it ecclesiastical take-over of the king-making ritual – not only compelled the king but also all participants to accept a certain position, and a specific share in the power relations of the two spheres. This then found its ultimate expression in the social drama of the ritual of king-making.

The Development of the Royal Consecration Ritual

The solemn occasion of the royal coronation can rightly be called the apogee of kingship. Here, the legitimacy to rule is publicly established, acknowledged and asserted with the agreement of the whole people. In Western Europe, this rite evolved over the centuries and developed from simple acclamations to a complex liturgical ceremony that included a wide spectrum of meaning and political implications. Likewise, the involvement of the clergy began in humble form in the fifth century until the episcopate took over the ritual completely from the eighth century onwards.

The participation of some divine agency behind a ruler's elevation can already be found in pre-Christian times, where it was understood as a specific distinction and almost super-human legitimation of rulership.⁷ Ritual ruler acclamations served to express and transmit an idea of sovereignty; the main function of the coronation was to prove the singular rank of the king, on the one hand, through coronation symbols and ritualistic acts and, on the other hand, through prayers.⁸ Within the concept of theocratic kingship, it is precisely this moment that the clergy was most interested in controlling since here the divine will found its ultimate expression, and it was the clergy who interpreted and communicated it to the people.

The first coronation to be conducted with the assistance of the clergy was that of the Byzantine Emperor Marcian in 450 AD.⁹ In the West, the cooperation of the Church did not become obligatory until the introduction of anointing with the Carolingian Pippin in 751 (by St Boniface) and 754 (by Pope Stephen II).¹⁰ From then onwards, the rite moved into the liturgical sphere, and was modelled onto Samuel's anointing of David.¹¹

et ait Dominus: Surge, unge eum: ipse est enim. Tulit ergo Samuel cornu olei, et unxit eum in medio fratrum ejus: et directus est spiritus Domini a die illa in David, et deinceps.¹²

The symbolical meaning of this unction is twofold. First, it has a constitutive aspect by legitimising the chosen one as king over the people. The pouring of oil over the king's head makes him a divinely appointed and installed *Christus domini* and raises his external status. Second, and more importantly, it has a transformative character with the king becoming a prophet internally. Because of the unction, the king was placed into a father-son relationship with God and 'immutavit ei Deus cor aliud'.¹³ This close bond explains the divine protection the king enjoys, but the unction does not prevent the king from being deposed; the prophet who anointed him could also expel him.¹⁴

While the introduction of this rite placed king-making firmly in ecclesiastical hands, it also opened up interpretative problems on the actual status of kings. The anointing of a king not only elevated him above his people and legitimised his rulership, but also conferred a Christ-like status upon him. According to Pope John VIII's theory on imperial unction, '[w]hat Christ possessed by nature, the emperor now possessed by grace [and] he obtains the regal powers of Christ through the medium of the pope'.¹⁵ The king was perceived as standing midway between clerical and lay, and as combining in himself a lay and ecclesiastical person, just as Christ was both God and Man.¹⁶ As 'vicar of the King of kings', the ruler is thus sanctified and, like a new David, he is *rex et propheta*.¹⁷ The apparent semblance between the priestly and royal unction resulted in a confusion of the actual dimension of royal power: like the pope, the king appeared to be a *rex* and *sacerdos*.¹⁸ This motif goes back to the New Testament writings of Peter:

Vos autem genus electum, *regale sacerdotium*, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis: ut virtutes adnuntietis ejus qui de tenebris vos vocavit in admirabile lumen suum.¹⁹

The eminent etymologist Isidore of Seville expounded on this even further when explaining the term *Christ*:

Christus namque a chrismate est appellatus, hoc est unctus. Praeceptum enim fuerat Iudaeis ut sacrum conficerent unguentum, quo perungi possent hi qui vocabantur ad sacerdotium vel ad regnum: et sicut nunc regibus indumentum purpurae insigne est regiae dignitatis, sic illis unctio sacri unguenti nomen ac potestatem regiam conferebat; et inde Christi dicti a chrismate, quod est unctio. [3] Nam chrisma Graece, Latine unctio nuncupatur, quae etiam Domino nomen adcommodavit facta spiritalis, quia Spiritu unctus est a Deo Patre, sicut in Actibus (4,27): 'Collecti sunt enim in hac civitate adversus sanctum Filium tuum, quem unxisti': non utique oleo visibili, sed gratiae dono, quod visibili significatur unguento. [4] Non est autem Salvatoris proprium nomen Christus, sed communis nuncupatio potestatis. Dum enim dicitur Christus, commune dignitatis nomen est; dum Iesus Christus, proprium est vocabulum Salvatoris.²⁰

Isidore explicitly connects the status of the Saviour with that of kings through the term *Christ* which does not denote anything other than being an anointed one. The intricate relationship between anointing and kingship is fully exposed here. Put simply, without anointing a king is not a king. Only anointing bestows power and office unto the king. During late antiquity, however, kings were not anointed, but Isidore establishes here the link between the biblical anointing and the baptism of Christians.²¹ This has been further developed in Bede's exegesis of Psalm 26:

Legitur quoque quod antiquitus duæ tantum personæ ungebantur, reges scilicet et sacerdotes. In quibus duabus personis præfigurabatur Rex et sacerdos futurus, Christus scilicet, a christmate dictus. Qui Rex est, quia nos regit et ducet, et sacerdos est, quia apud patrem interpellat pro nobis. [...] et faciens nos membra sua, ut nos in ipso Christo christi essemus. Totus enim Christus caput est et membra. Et sic non solum ad ipsum, sed ad nos quoque pertinet unctio. Unde dictum est: Vos estis genus electum, regale sacerdotium[.]²²

By connecting the royal and priestly unction with the baptismal anointing, Bede emphasises the liturgical character of the rite.²³ Furthermore, he conceives of the king and his people as one body. The royal unction is thus a collective rite since the king as *Christus* transmits his unction onto his people, turning them into *Christi* as well, which again establishes and confirms the link to I Peter 2.9 (*gens sancta*).

The parallelism between royal unction and baptism is apparent in the quotations from Isidore and Bede. Both rites change the status of man, bestow a new character and transform someone into a new man. Baptism, in particular, introduced the baptised one into a new social order, into a 'new human community'.²⁴ It cleanses and regenerates spiritually and thus prepares people for their new roles within Christian society. By analogue, the king then is cleansed too and prepared for his role as ruler over the Christian people.²⁵

Probably the oldest manuscript depiction of the anointing of a king can be found in the *Warmund Sacramentary*. A priest is standing at a baptismal font and is about to put a crown on the head of the king, who is bowing his head to receive it; behind the king, five men are in attendance. One of them, a cleric, carries two containers of holy oil which 'symbolize the two messianic roles of king and priest which the baptismal anointing confers upon Jesus'.²⁶ The regal character of baptism allows for the concept of the sacred monarch to emerge, which in turn infers 'a mystical sharing in the royal and priestly anointment of Christ'.²⁷ The royal anointing thus changed the status of the king, prepared him for his office, and made him worthy of the grace: 'Et insiliet in te spiritus Domini, [...] et mutaberis in virum alium'.²⁸ Crucially, however, the rite also placed the king firmly into the hands of the clergy. Baptism and royal anointing alike introduce the candidate into a new model of society, but simultaneously subject the respective candidate to the rules and regulations of that new society. The ones to impose them are the official exponents of that new order: the clergy.

From the eighth century onwards, the episcopacy became more and more active and involved in the ritual process of king-making. The insistence on the divine will as the dominant force when choosing rulers necessitated an interpreter of that divine will, which could only be the leading clergy. Pre-existing methods of ruler acclamations were re-interpreted within a Christian framework with the result that the people lost their voice in the royal election process.²⁹ In his study on liturgical ruler acclamations, Ernst Kantorowicz illustrates how popular acclamation was supplanted by the liturgical *laudes*.³⁰ The popular voice was demoted to a *collaudatio* (high praise), which was spoken before unction and coronation as public assent to see a certain prince crowned. The liturgical *laudes*, however, were introduced after the consecration with the ensuing mass as an ecclesiastical recognition of the king just consecrated, and as manifested agreement on the part of the Church with the preceding act. Popular acclamation was then the public election, and transferred the royal power while the *laudes* presented the king as one anointed of God. Thus, the king was placed within the framework of the secular Christian

realm, and his government was linked to Christ so that he could fulfil his office as *vicarius Christi*.

This process is clearly illustrated in a text in the ninth-century *Freisinger Benedictional*, which was spoken during the royal anointing:

Unguantur manus istae . . . ut sis benedictus et *constitutus rex* in regno isto *super populum* istum, quem Dominus Deus tuus tibi dedit ad regendum ac gubernandum.³¹

It is the anointing that bestows the royal office and thus constitutes the king. Furthermore, the royal office has been given as a favour and cannot be claimed by the king.³² The increasing influence of the clergy displaced the *vox populi* as the constitutive element in king-making. Indeed, for Hincmar of Rheims, any ascent to the royal office, without any divine interference, was condemnable and invalid.³³ The liturgification of the ritual emphasised the divine will not only during the royal consecration, but throughout the whole of the royal reign: through the ritual, God and King were inextricably linked.

Although royal anointing never bestowed an indelible character on the king – hence the possibility of royal deposition – the clergy nevertheless sat uneasy with the close similarity between episcopal and royal anointing.³⁴ The development of the Frankish imperial anointing ritual in the ninth century illustrates how the episcopate succeeded in ‘demoting’ the royal rite to re-evaluate their own unction, and to change the status of the king in relation to that of bishops.³⁵ Between the imperial coronations of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald, the *ordines* were adapted to suit the current political events: for Louis’s unction (816), Holy Chrism was used to anoint his head; in Lothar I’s ceremony (823), insignia (a sword) were handed over for the first time; the ceremony of Louis II (850) was constitutive because he had not been made emperor by his father before and the pope did not need to invite him as with the emperors before; and the first time the pope designated and nominated an emperor was with Charles the Bald (875), although this was also due to the end of the direct line of descent.³⁶ Some components of the *ordines* were also altered, especially with the institution of the new *Ordo B* during the pontificate of John VIII (872–882). The ceremonies of unction and coronation were separated with the first being performed by three bishops and the second by the pope only. The prayer that was spoken when imposing the crown changed from ‘Receive the crown’ (*accipe coronam*) to ‘Receive the sign of glory’ (*accipe signum gloriae*). The focus was moved from hereditary kingship towards the mediatory role of the pope between Christ and emperor. Lastly, the oil for anointing was no longer the Holy Chrism, but the Oil of catechumens, and the king was not anointed on the head as before but on the right arm and between the shoulders. The shift of the two powers in favour of the papal authority is particularly obvious here: ‘[a]nointing of the head would symbolize headship, whilst anointing of the right arm and between the shoulder blades [. . .] symbolizes the sanctification of the physical support and protection of the head’.³⁷ The emperor thus anointed was hence lowered in status while his function as protector of the Church was now more pronounced.

This development of the rite shows not only the changing conceptions of kingship, but also the increasing efforts of the episcopate to strengthen their own position within the secular realm, and, if possible, to elevate themselves above kings and emperors. The rite of anointing reflects the two most important endeavours of the episcopate: ‘first, the

auxiliary role of the chosen king, [. . .] and secondly, the episcopal monopoly of king-making – the *sacerdos* being the unique channel of supernatural power conceived of as *gratia divina*'.³⁸ Hincmar of Rheims, in particular, was a driving force behind the interpretation of anointing as basis for episcopal jurisdiction over kings. In his elaboration on the Gelasian principle, Hincmar conceives of the royal consecration 'as concrete application of episcopal *auctoritas*'.³⁹

tanto gravior pondus est sacerdotum, quanto etiam pro ipsis regibus hominum in divino reddituri sunt examine rationem; et tanto est dignitas pontificum maior quam regum quia reges in culmen regum sacrantur a pontificibus, pontifices autem a regibus consecrari non possunt.⁴⁰

Between kings and bishops, there existed a fundamental divide in understanding the value of *consecrator* and *consecratus*, which is incidentally also the difference between eastern and western conceptions of the same. In Byzantium, St John the Baptist provided the model that the one who consecrates is ranked lower than the one who is consecrated.⁴¹ In the Roman West, it was the Apostle Paul who provided the notion that the *consecrator* ranks higher than the consecrated one: 'Sine ulla autem contradictione, quod minus est, a meliore benedicitur.'⁴² Thus, while kings and emperors leaned towards the Byzantine model, bishops and popes tried to enforce the Roman one.

This general survey of the development of the ritual complex of king-making has shown that the clergy successfully claimed and dominated the processes of royal elevation. The pre-Christian rites of king-making were supplanted by Christian ideas, and hence paralleled the developments in early medieval political theory. The greater the influence of Christianity, the more both secular and religious realms merged together. As the ultimate expression of this process, the rite of royal anointing and consecration was used not only to affirm the king's power and status, but also to assert his dependence on the clergy.

The Anglo-Saxon Consecration Ritual

In comparison to the extant Frankish material on consecration rituals, the sources from Anglo-Saxon England are relatively scarce. The standard phrase denoting royal succession in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is 'fon to rice', and it is open to conjecture whether that implies some consecration ritual that might include anointing. The extant sources suggest the existence of a consecration ritual from the eighth century onwards and its continued, almost consistent, use by Anglo-Saxon kings. Apart from the *Chronicle* entries, there are references in homilies, saints' lives, letters, and also in charters. The official record of such a ritual is the *ordo*, and evidence suggests that the oldest extant West European *ordo* is in fact an Anglo-Saxon one that had been continuously in use from at least the early ninth century (probably for the consecration of King Æthelwulf of Wessex) until the end of the Anglo-Saxon era with only slight changes.⁴³ The aim here is not to trace the textual interdependencies of the extant English *ordines*, nor to establish their dating and occasions for use;⁴⁴ instead, this section will look more closely at the extant sources to determine whether the consecration ritual was an accepted practice in Anglo-Saxon king-making and its implication for king and clergy. In focusing on Edgar's consecration at Bath in 973, another point is to outline the minutiae of how such a ceremonial could have proceeded,

and in what way the details of the whole ritual informed a changed concept of Christian kingship.

The ceremonial elevation of a king to the throne, irrespective of its elements, was a component of Anglo-Saxon king-making since at least the last quarter of the eighth century. While many extant sources are not particularly forthcoming about the details of such an event, the combination of all references conveys the desire to establish a formalised process of royal elevation, as well as reflecting changing notions of kingship. A close investigation might even reveal that a form of ritualistic royal succession predates the first Frankish event with Pippin's consecration and anointing in 751 and 754, respectively.

In her study on the connections between Carolingian Francia and Wessex, Joanne Story draws attention to a neglected manuscript illustration that depicts an anointing scene.⁴⁵ The whole manuscript is dated to the middle decades of the eighth century and it is probably of Northumbrian origin.⁴⁶ On the recto of the first folio, there are two drawings, the upper one being an illustration of Samuel's anointing of David, the oldest one from Anglo-Saxon England.⁴⁷ Samuel ('samuel profeta') pours out the contents of a horn over David's head: the scene depicts the very moment of David's anointing. The other drawing shows David's beheading of Goliath (Goliath's helmet bears a boar figure, similar to the Benty-Grange and the Pioneer helmets). While the connection between a sketch and the existence of a political act might seem far-fetched indeed, the mere fact that an artist was able to take an Old Testament scene and contemporise it by referring to cultural, even personal, knowledge reveals current awareness for the Old Testament foundation of the ritual. Even more importantly, it also implies a familiarity with the ritual, and its clothing in Anglo-Saxon garb (Goliath's helmet) suggests that anointing of (Northumbrian) kings might have been practised as early as the first half of the eighth century, thus pre-dating Pippin's ceremony. The importance of this fact cannot be underestimated, especially since the continental rite was slow in developing and it was only with Hincmar of Rheims that it was enforced as an essential part of royal and imperial successions.⁴⁸

Apart from this early illustration, Anglo-Saxon sources are shy in revealing details about royal succession. For the seventh and eighth centuries, neither Bede nor the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mention any crowning ceremony. The *Chronicle* applies the usual 'fon to rice' (for example, annals 758 [757] and 790 in the D recension), and even Bede's vocabulary is not particularly varied. There are no references to any coronation ceremonies; indeed, there is hardly anything that might suggest some ritual process of king-making.⁴⁹ The first reference to the anointing of kings can be found in the Legates' report of 786. In connection to the rather current crime of regicide, the legates pronounced that the murder of a king is equal to the betrayal of Judas. To underscore their point, they emphasise the particular status of kings:

Duodecimo sermone sanximus, ut in ordinatione regum nullus permittat pravorum prævalere assensum: sed legitime reges a sacerdotibus et senioribus populi eligantur, et non de adulterio vel incoestu procreati: quia sicut nostris temporibus ad sacerdotium secundum canones adulter pervenire non potest; sic nec christus Domini esse valet, et rex totius regni, et hæres patriæ, qui ex legitimo non fuerit connubio generatus [. . .] In necem regis nemo communicare audeat, quia christus Domini est[.]⁵⁰

The legates were, of course, inspired by continental practices, probably the anointing of Pippin and his sons, but here the status of the king as the Lord's anointed is applied for the first time to Anglo-Saxon circumstances. It can no longer be determined whether, by condemning the crime of regicide, the legates inadvertently introduced a new stage in king-making or rather fixed in writing a known, but only occasionally employed custom. They might just have applied a continental practice to Anglo-Saxon England on the assumption that the Anglo-Saxon kings and bishops would understand the context of the reference. However, the mere fact that the legates would apply this terminology to kingship endows this rite with papal legitimisation, whether or not it had been practised before. It appears that Offa understood what anointing could imply for kingship, which is at least as important as the fact that he tried to model himself and his dynasty on his Carolingian neighbours. The anointing of a king imparted Christ-like status, and elevated him above everyone else. Considering Offa's struggles with Archbishop Jænberht in particular, the superior status as bestowed by the rite must have appeared as a very potent means to dispose of episcopal control. While this would have come too late for Offa himself, it would allow his successors to rule almost independently of their archbishops. Thus, the outcome of the legates' pronouncement was twofold: firstly, there was a change in the status of kingship, moving it even closer to the divine sphere. Secondly, the consecration of Offa's son Ecgrith in 787 gave the rite much wider currency and made it much more acceptable than before. In this instance at least, the royal consecration appears to have become an essential part of the succession rituals which might have been continued throughout the following years, although there are no further references in the *Chronicle*.

Later sources are slightly more revealing about royal successions. *Æthelweard's Chronicle*, for example, is rather interesting with regard to the terminology applied. Throughout his account, kings just succeed one another ('successit'), but when he reaches the Wessex royal house there is a change in *Æthelweard's* vocabulary. Egbert is ordained ('ordinatur Ecgbryht super Occidentales Anglos in regnum'), as are the sons of *Æthelwulf* ('ordinati sunt filii eius in regnum'), Edward the Elder and Edgar are both crowned ('Eaduerdus [...] coronatur ipse stemata regali' and 'Eadgar coronatur in regnum') and *Athelstan* enjoys the crown of the empire ('imperii functus fuerat stefos *Æthelstan* rex robustissimus').⁵¹ Of course, *Æthelweard* is indebted to his sources for his information, and the further back they go the less detailed they are. In his *Chronicon*, *Æthelweard* marks out the Wessex royal house, from which the Anglo-Saxon kings sprung, placing particular emphasis on how the Wessex princes became kings; implicitly, he is stating that the current Anglo-Saxon kings can look back on a long line of legitimate predecessors.⁵² Thus, *Æthelweard* is endowing the Wessex dynasty with particular throneworthiness and legitimacy from King Egbert onwards.⁵³

The clearest reference to the anointing of Wessex princes derives from the description of Alfred's journey to Rome. With the exception of Pope Leo's letter, which just speaks of the reception of Alfred as a spiritual son and the decoration of him with consulate vestments, all of the Anglo-Saxon sources are unanimous in interpreting it as a royal anointing.⁵⁴ The extant evidence is open to question; Janet Nelson, for example, concludes that the story had been manipulated by Alfred and his circle to bolster his authority beyond the borders of Wessex.⁵⁵ Furthermore, she argues that the papal letter is not authentic as it stands; it might even be an outright forgery concocted in the late eleventh century to support papal demands of English fealty from William I.⁵⁶ One other piece of evidence

has not been mentioned so far: a Winchester charter by King Æthelwulf (S 325), probably from 854:

Eac ic her geswutelie þæt ic þisne freols ætforan sancte Petre on Rome & þam halgan papan Leone swa gefæstnode swa swa me & eallan ðeodscype gewearþ on Englalande ær ic to Rome fore. Þæt wæs þæt mon ælles ðises freolses are æfre for ane hide werian scolde, for þam þe Godes ar æfre freogre beon sceal þonne ænig woruld ar. & min sune eac Ælfred þe mid me for & þær to kyninge gehalgod wæs þan papan on hand gesealde þæt he ðisne freols æfre gefyrþrian wolde, & his bearn gif him God ænigra geupe to þam ylcan sprittan wolde.⁵⁷

Although this document is classed as spurious, it is another witness to Alfred's anointing in its agreement with the other sources, and with his anointing as an accepted fact.⁵⁸ Apart from enhancing royal authority, this fact or legend also serves to establish a tradition of Wessex royal anointings which, in turn, further legitimises the succession of any Wessex heir to the throne. Incidentally, all the sources that report Alfred's childhood consecration as king give little detail when he finally succeeds in 871. In *Æthelweard's Chronicle*, Alfred obtains the kingdom ('obtinit regnum'); in Asser, Alfred takes over the government ('totius regni gubernacula, divino concedente nutu [. . .] suscepit'), and in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Alfred succeeds to the kingdom ('Ða feng ælfred æpelwulfing his broþor to Wessexenarice').⁵⁹ The legitimacy of his kingship has already been established; following the (later) sources, it was only a matter of time until Alfred would fulfil what was bestowed upon him when a child.

The sources from the tenth century are the most detailed in terms of their reports on royal consecrations. By now, the rite had been firmly established; there were *ordines* that liturgified and regulated the ceremony, and, crucially, there were kings and bishops embracing and advocating the new dimension of kingship that this rite conferred. This change is reflected in the *Chronicle* annals, speaking now more often of successions and consecrations, but more so in homilies and saints' lives.⁶⁰ Ælfric, for example, explains royal anointing and links it with episcopal anointing to emphasise the special status both are accorded through that rite:

Hu is he gesmyrod? Man smyrað cyning mid gehalgodum ele. þonne man hine to cyninge gehalgað. and on ælcere hadunge ge on diaconhade ge on preosthade. ge on biscophade æfre se ðe ðær gehadod bið. he bið gesmyrod mid gehalgodum ele; Crist is soðlice ealra biscopa biscop. and ealra cyninga cyning. nu is he gesmyrod na mid eorðlicum ele. ac mid seofonfealdre gife þæs halgan gastes for ðan þe on criste wunað eal gefyllednys ðære godcundnysse lichamlice[.]⁶¹

The king is anointed with hallowed oil which, in line with current political theory, makes him Christ-like; in other words, the oil transfers royal powers and through the oil the king becomes king. Curiously enough, however, Ælfric does not draw any distinction between royal and episcopal anointing. This raises the issue of how far both rites were different or similar in Anglo-Saxon England, and if Hincmar's dictum had any implications for the Anglo-Saxon episcopate. Since the authority of Anglo-Saxon bishops was comparatively weaker than that of their continental brothers, the promulgation of a superior status to kings would not only overstate the fact, but would also have been deemed rather inappropriate, even politically dangerous. Thus, Ælfric was only able to place both king

and bishop on the same level, rather than entering the complicated issue of episcopal or royal superiority.

One further document is worth mentioning in this regard since it combines notions of theocratic kingship with the ritual of royal consecration. The Anglo-Saxon *Promissio regis* is a 'three-fold promise made at their coronations by Anglo-Saxon kings in the tenth and eleventh centuries, followed by two paragraphs on the duties of kingship, addressed to king and people'.⁶² In the first section, which is similar to the Latin promises, the king vows to preserve peace, to forbid all unrighteousness and to be just and merciful towards his people.⁶³ The second section refers back to this promise by reiterating the rewards or punishments a Christian king can expect if he observes or fails to observe this promise:

Se cristena cyng þe þas þing gehealdeð. he geearnað him sylfum woroldlicne weorðmynt. and him ece god. ægðer gemiltsað. ge on andwerdum life. ge eac on þam ecean þe æfre ne ateorað; Gif he þonne þæt awægð. þæt gode wæs behaten. þonne sceal hit syððan. wysian swyðe. sona on his þeode. and eall hit on ende. gehwyrð on þæt wyrste. butan he on his liffæce. ær hit gebete. Eala leof hlaford beorh hurupinga georne þe sylfum. Gepenc þæt gelome þæt þu scealt þa heorde. forð æt godes dome. ywan and lædan. þe þu eart to hyrde gescyft on þysum life. and þonne gecennan hu þu geheolde. þæt crist ær gebohte. sylf mid his blode.⁶⁴

The king is exhorted and admonished to be mindful of the lives that were entrusted to him through the conferral of the royal office. This section expresses the idea that the king has to account for his rulership at the Last Judgement, which is also a fixed concept of theocratic rulership.⁶⁵ The notion that the king is responsible for the moral welfare of his people by educating them, but that he might also be the instrument of divine punishment if the people err, finds strong reinforcement here.

The last section details the duties of a king, which consist mainly of being just and preventing all injustices, for example, defending and protecting widows and orphans, and correcting adulteries and separating those who commit incest. He should also appoint wise men as counsellors and righteous men as officers of the realm, because, ultimately, 'for þan swa hwæt swa hig to unrihte gedoð þurh his aful. he his sceal ealles gescead agyldan on domesdæg'.⁶⁶ This section is particularly indebted to the *rex iniquus* tradition deriving from Ps.-Cyprian's *De duodecim abusivis*.⁶⁷ Here, emphasis is placed on the consecration of the king, 'gehalgodes cynges', as if the duty weighs the heavier through the anointing: it is not only Christ's royal powers that are conferred through the holy oil, but also Christ's responsibility towards mankind. Thus, just as Christ saved humanity, it is the king's duty to save his subjects by preventing injustices of all kind.

One possible author of the *Promissio Regis* could be Wulfstan, archbishop of York, with Æthelred the likely recipient.⁶⁸ The last section, in particular, supports this argument: the crimes and injustices listed were prevalent in Æthelred's reign and we find several exhortations to Æthelred to end these. The demands to expel kin-slayers, appoint old and wise men as counsellors, righteous men as officers, and the final statement that the king will have to account for the deeds of such officers, can be seen as direct replies to the most prevalent wrongs in Æthelred's reign: bad counsellors, army leaders who feigned sickness, the murder of Edward the Martyr. This was another attempt to provoke royal action, a demand that was rendered even more powerful through its reference to the consecration oath. Moving this promise from after the ceremony to before the actual consecration

bestowed a conditional character on kingship.⁶⁹ The addition of this oath to the two rather homiletic sections was thus a forceful reminder to the king of what he had promised before he received the crown: a promise he so far did not live up to and, hence, he had not yet fulfilled his part of the kingship contract. This section reveals a different aspect of kingship as office: the conditional character of kingship. With this text, the king was given notice – one could almost say that this came as close to a threat of deposition as possible.

So far, one feature has been left unmentioned, that of election. Although the sources are again not very detailed with regard to the election process, they refer continuously to the element of choice in the institution of a new king. That this is not mere formality is apparent in those annals that report of depositions of kings and the subsequent choice of substitutes by the people and/or magnates of the realm. In 867, for example, the *Chronicle* speaks of civil strife in Northumbria and that ‘hi hæfdon heora cining aworpene Osbriht. & ungecynde cining underfengon Ællan’.⁷⁰ Asser too speaks of the unanimous election of Alfred as king; indeed, had he wished it, the people would have preferred him to his older brother (ch. 42). Throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, then, there was a strong popular element in king-making which was constitutive for kingship. The many occasions during the early Anglo-Saxon period in which the people actively deposed a king and chose a new one more to their liking also imply that it was not only the elite of the realm who acted as electors. While such popular outbursts might have been only the climax of a disastrous rule, the people could nevertheless be a decisive factor in royal successions.⁷¹ The element of choice was even more powerful in cases of the existence of several heirs apparent. The strife that arose after the death of Edgar is one such instance. Although Æthelred was from his birth onwards the designated heir, his choice was overruled by a group of magnates who preferred his older brother. Edward’s subsequent death could then be interpreted as divine punishment for not complying with God’s designated candidate, but favouring the people’s choice.

In the discussions of the development of an Anglo-Saxon coronation ritual, as well as in the analyses of the existing English *ordines*, charters have not yet been accorded a significant status. This is rather surprising since they can offer insights that other contemporary witnesses might have overlooked. The fact that they were usually written by a scribe with ecclesiastical training also implies that the vocabulary used would correspond closely to the actual ritual process. There are about 130 charters of the corpus, as designated in chapter 2, that to some extent denote the appointment of a person as king, a succession rite, an election and royal insignia.⁷² Of these, most charters refer to royal regalia and to the royal throne. The third most frequent vocabulary refers to anointing, followed by that of election and appointment. The remaining items refer to the divine bestowal of royal powers without explicit hint to consecration or insignia. Accordingly, the oldest charter reference to royal ordination can be found in S 183 (AD 821/spurious; authentic basis), a charter by King Coenwulf of Mercia.⁷³ Only a year later, a charter by Coenwulf’s successor, Ceolwulf, speaks directly of the king’s consecration, ‘consecrationis meæ’ (S 186; AD 822/authentic). Thus, a consecration rite had been the accepted process for royal succession in the early ninth century, and it is tempting to connect these two charters to Offa’s consecration of his son as further proof for an establishment of the ritual. References to an election process go further back, however: the earliest charter is S 241 (AD 699/spurious; authentic basis) by King Ine of Wessex. The element of election has already been discussed, and references to it are usually linked to the divine involvement. The

terminology of appointment refers indirectly to a similar element of election; the oldest charter being S 28 (AD 762 or 763/authentic) by Eadberht II of Kent. This again usually includes a reference to the divine participation. The bearing and wearing of royal insignia seems to have been far more common and the earliest reference can be found in a charter by King Æthelberht of Kent (S 4; AD 605/spurious; authentic basis).

The interpretation and analysis of charter evidence depends on the issue of their authenticity, and early charters, in particular, have to be handled with care. Nevertheless, the inclusion of such references points to the customs surrounding these rites, if not at the charter's purported date, then at least during the time of their fabrication. What can be inferred, however, is that some kind of consecration rite had been established by the early ninth century, if not already in the last decades of the eighth century. One wonders, however, whether references to royal consecration were just literary flourishes or intended to convey a deeper meaning. It is already established knowledge that kings would make grants at their day of consecration so a reference would naturally be included in the charter text.⁷⁴ Similar to the consecration reference in the *Promissio regis*, however, could the inclusion of such vocabulary be a slight hint to the king, or even to the people, that all was not well? King Athelstan's succession, for example, was rather disputed: his father, Edward the Elder, apparently intended his son Ælfweard to succeed him on the throne, and Athelstan only became king because he had the backing of the Mercian elite and not least because Ælfweard died only shortly after his father.⁷⁵ Athelstan's consecration was hence delayed by a year, and the invention of the phrase 'rex per omnipatrantis dexteram totius Bryttaniæ regni solio sublimatus' in the charters of his reign could be a continued effort to mask these earlier problems.⁷⁶ These difficulties also account for the diplomatic reckoning of years from the election rather than the consecration of the king.⁷⁷

The diplomatic corpus, then, offers additional evidence for the rite of royal consecration since the terminology applied supplements the information contained in other sources. Still, all the sources combined do not offer a detailed description of the course of such an event, and thus I turn to 973, the year of King Edgar's coronation.

Edgar's Coronation

Her Eadgar wæs, Engla waldend,
 corðre miclum to cyninge gehalgod
 on ðære ealdan byrig, Acemannesceastre;
 eac hi igbuend oðre worde
 beornas Baðan nemnaþ. þær wæs blis micel
 on þam eadgan dæge eallum geworden,
 þone niða bearn nemnað and cigað
 Pentecostenes dæg. þær wæs preosta heap,
 micel muneca ðreat, mine gefrege,
 gleawra gegaderod.⁷⁸

The event of King Edgar's coronation ceremony at Bath in 973 on Pentecost is shrouded in mystery, in particular with regard to its long delay and the question of the number of consecrations Edgar actually went through. To begin with, the late medieval story of a

seven-year penance imposed by Dunstan on Edgar because the latter had allegedly run off with a nun, is indeed just a legend.⁷⁹ The only plausible explanation for this delay is that Edgar would enter his thirtieth year in 973, the age at which Christ began his ministry rather than the typical age of priestly ordination.⁸⁰ The actual date is also important. Pentecost was the traditional time of promulgating laws,⁸¹ so his consecration could take on the symbolic form of the institution of new law. Edgar consciously modelled himself on Christ to realise his kingship as vicariate of Christ. Postponing his consecration served as another means to draw parallels between him, the earthly king, and the heavenly one and also between Scriptural time and the Anglo-Saxon age.

The 973 consecration could, in fact, be Edgar's second, if not third rite.⁸² There is no recorded evidence that Edgar was consecrated as king at his successions to Mercia or later Wessex, and episcopal succession lists reveal that no archbishop could have been present on either of these occasions. Nevertheless, Edgar must have been consecrated, if only to maintain the tradition of his forefathers, probably using an *ordo* based on the Second English *Ordo*. It is indeed inconceivable that a king would have reigned without being properly instituted as such; the royal styles in the charters at least reveal full legitimate kingship. Legitimacy is in fact the main factor which is evidenced in the struggles after Edgar's death: the chief argument of the opponents of Edward was that neither Edgar nor Edward's mother had been anointed, nor was Edward's mother, when Edward was born, hence he was not legitimate (enough) to succeed to the throne. The same argument could not be applied to Æthelred: his mother, Ælfthryth, was anointed, as we know from her charter styles, and Edgar, then, must have been too, probably when he succeeded to Wessex. The coronation of 973 was neither delayed nor deferred, but it was Edgar's inauguration as ruler of an Anglo-Saxon empire.

The discussion of the royal styles in the Anglo-Saxon charters in chapter 2 has shown that the functional titles of the tenth century attained an increasingly imperial or all-embracing connotation. The efforts of the tenth-century reformers and Edgar himself have also shown that, with Edgar, Anglo-Saxon kingship moved closer to the divine sphere and also closer to a conflation of both the secular and religious realms. What Edgar was trying to achieve, and what indeed he did achieve according to the sources, was a hegemony of Heaven and Earth. Just as Christ ruled in Heaven over all Christendom, so Edgar ruled over all Anglo-Saxon England and, as vicar of Christ, he also participated in the heavenly rule. The 973 consecration of Edgar then was an act of state, designed to demonstrate Edgar's authority.⁸³ His claim to imperial rule is already evinced by his choice of location: not the royal villa of Kingston-upon-Thames, but Bath, the ancient Roman town, (probably) made famous in the Old English poem *The Ruin*.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Edgar managed to receive allegiance from his British neighbours like Kenneth, king of the Scots, and other sub-kings.⁸⁵ The imitation of continental models is nothing new – Offa was awe-inspired by Charlemagne – and later Anglo-Saxon kings came to perceive themselves as similar to the Ottonian kings and emperors who were rulers over many nations. By the 920s at least, Athelstan deemed his sister Edith worthy enough to be the wife of the German king Otto I the Great, later emperor (962). The combined evidence suggests that Edgar's consecration was outwardly a demonstration of power and inwardly the proclamation of an imperial concept of kingship.

Although this consecration was of extreme importance, extant sources reveal little detail about its actual course. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* contains a commemorative

poem, but refers only to the place, date and the multitude of monks who attended the feast.⁸⁶ Only the *Vita S. Oswaldi* by Byrhtferth of Ramsey provides further detail:⁸⁷

[Edgar called out for the nobility of the realm to assemble at Pentecost 973] [S]ed tam rationabili scientia undique aduentitabant et cum gaudio accelerabant, ut eum episcopi reuerentissimi benedicerent, ungerent, consecrarent – Christo largiente, ex quo uel a quo summe benedictionis et sancte religionis unctio beata processit. Tunc accessit preclare festiuitatis splendor et sollempnitas instabat sancti spiritus, quando hec agebatur, quando cuncti ueniebant ad consecrandum gloriosum regem, cuius sceptrigera gloria tunc lucidius refulsit et diadema aurea resplenduit, cuius pulchritudo aurifluo metallo comparari poterat.⁸⁸

While the king was being led into the Church by two bishops, the choir sang the antiphon: ‘Firmetur manus tua et exaltetur dextera tua [. . .]’.⁸⁹ Upon arrival in the church, the king prostrated himself before the altar, Dunstan took the diadem off his head and began to intonate the *Te Deum*. After raising the king from the ground, the archbishop questioned him and the king gave a threefold promise:

Inprimis promitto ut ecclesia Dei et omnis populus Christianus ueram pacem nostro arbitrio in omni tempore conseruet; aliud promitto, ut rapacitates et omnes iniquitates omnibus gradibus interdiciam; tertium, ut in omnibus iudiciis aequitatem et misericordiam precipiam, ut mihi et uobis indulgeat suam misericordiam clemens et misericors Deus.⁹⁰

After the recital of several further prayers by Dunstan and Oswald, Edgar was anointed while the choir sang the antiphon ‘Vnixerunt Salomonem Sadoc sacerdos et Nathan propheta regem in Gion’.⁹¹ Then, Edgar was given ring and sword, a crown was placed on his head and, after a blessing, he was also given the sceptre and rod. After a final mass, the solemn celebration of the day began.

The importance of the royal promise has already been discussed. References to elements of this threefold promise can be found in several of the coronation prayers.⁹² The ultimate expression of the creation of the king as mediator between Heaven and Earth, however, is the *Sta et retine* prayer, spoken after the unction when the king was led to the throne by the bishops:

Sta et retine amodo statum. quem hucusque paterna suggestionem tenuisti. hereditario iure tibi delegatum per auctoritatem dei omnipotentis. et praesentem traditionem nostram. omnium scilicet episcoporum ceterorumque dei seruorum. et quanto clerum sacris altaribus propinquorem prospicis. tanta ei potiorum in locis congruis honorem impendere memineris. quatinus mediator dei et hominum. te mediatorem cleri et plebis in hoc regni solio confirmet. et in regno aeterno secum regnare faciat.⁹³

Here, the parallels between Christ and king are obvious. The king is modelled as exact mirror of Christ, albeit on an earthly scale. Just as Christ acts as mediator between God and humankind, the king acts as mediator between the representatives of God, the clergy and his people as part of humankind. Although it is not spelt out, the king is here anointed to become the vicar of Christ.⁹⁴

During the consecration ceremony, the king also received the royal insignia of sword, ring, crown, sceptre and rod as symbolic expressions of his kingship. The accompanying

prayers all refer to the duties that lie ahead of the king. With the sword, the king was asked to defend and protect the Church, to destroy enemies of Christendom and shatter the power of injustice so that the king ‘cum mundi Salvatore, cuius typum geris in nomine, sine fine merearis regnare’.⁹⁵ This again refers to the transformation of the king as *christus*. The prayer for the crowning also points to the royal duties of defence and protection. Just as the clergy cares for the people inwardly, so the ruler is called upon to care for them outwardly by defending the Church so that he will emerge as successful governor and useful executor of the divinely conferred rulership.

The occasion of a royal consecration was an important event on several levels. First, it asserted a society’s identity by uniting the people(s) under one common ruler who embodied them all. Second, it endowed the consecrated king with legitimacy and authority. Third, and most importantly, it visually expressed divine involvement by turning a mere man into a *christus* through the anointing with hallowed oil. Edgar’s consecration was the opportunity to demonstrate his hegemonial ambitions, but it was also the culmination of his ecclesiastical endeavours. After this solemn act, he emerged as the *vicarius Christi* of Æthelwold’s appellation in the New Minster charter (S 745).

Visualising Rituals: Art and Architecture

Wrætlic is þes wealstan, wyrde gebræcon;
 burgstede burston, broснаð enta geweorc. [. . .]
 Oft þæs wag gebad
 ræghar ond readfah rice æfter oþrum,
 ofstonden under stormum; steap geap gedreas. [. . .]
 Beorht wæron burgræced, burnsele monige,
 heah horngestreon, heresweg micel,
 meodoheall monig //M// dreama full,
 oþþæt þæt onwende wyrd seo swiþe. [. . .]
 Hryre wong gecrong
 gebrocen to beorgum, þær iu beorn monig
 glædmod ond goldbeorht gleoma gefrætwed,
 wlonc ond wingal wighyrstum scan;
 seah on sinc, on sylfor, on searogimmas,
 on ead, on æht, on eorcanstan,
 on þas beorhtan burg bradan rices.
 Stanhofu stodan, stream hate wearp
 widan wylme; weal eall befeng
 beorhtan bosme, þær þa þaþu wæron,
 hat on hreþre. þæt wæs hyðelic.⁹⁶

This Old English poem, *The Ruin*, probably describes the ancient town of Bath. The juxtaposition between crumbling ruins and past splendours evokes an image of imperial grandeur – giants built the walls, giants in height, power and sway. The town was a place of feasts and banquets, riches were flowing like the hot waters and men were merry. Despite its focus on the transience of life, the poem presents an illustration of the possible

stage of Edgar's consecration in 973. References to the imperial origins of the town are linked with Anglo-Saxon culture; similarly, Edgar's coronation is staged to link both empires, the Roman and the Anglo-Saxon one.

The Roman name of Bath, *Aquae Sulis*, suggests that it was the Celtic goddess Sulis who presided over the hot springs.⁹⁷ After being abandoned by the Romans in the fifth century, it is mentioned again in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* annal of AD 577, in which year Cuthwulf and Ceawlin fought against the Britons, killed three kings and captured Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath.⁹⁸ Archaeological excavations further suggest that the site continued to be inhabited, albeit on a rapidly decreasing scale.⁹⁹ From the last quarter of the seventh century, there is evidence of the establishment of an Anglo-Saxon minster which was situated close to the Roman temple complex and might have incorporated early Roman or post-Roman Christian churches.¹⁰⁰ In the eighth century, Bath achieved the status of an important frontier town, lying on the borders of Wessex and Mercia, and it was rebuilt on a more elaborate scale under Offa. A charter by Offa's son Ecgfrith refers to Bath as a 'celebrated town'.¹⁰¹ In the late ninth and early tenth centuries, Bath was fortified as a *burh*, which testifies to its growing importance as a frontier town as well as to its increasing population.¹⁰² The town reached its apex with the consecration of Edgar in 973, but already in the eleventh century it trundled into insignificance.

The choice of Bath as site for such an important ceremony reveals many facets of Edgar's ambitions. Historically, it afforded a unique opportunity to connect Britain's Roman past with its Anglo-Saxon present. This connection might have reached as far back as to King Offa, who might have wanted to establish a Mercian analogue to Charlemagne's *Pfalzkapelle* at Aachen.¹⁰³ Like Bath, the site of today's Aachen was settled by the Romans because of the presence of hot springs. Both its Roman and its subsequent German name reflect the importance of water, *Aquae Grani* (later *Aquisgranum*) and *Ahha* (old Germanic for water), with *Grani* being a reference to Apollo, the Roman god of arts.¹⁰⁴ Charlemagne's chapel at Aachen was modelled on San Vitale in Ravenna, and, as a representation of the Heavenly Jerusalem, Charlemagne sought to connect earthly and divine by placing his throne on a gallery and thus midway between Heaven and Earth.¹⁰⁵ It is possible that Edgar perceived similar connections to those identified by Offa, perhaps even intending to turn Bath into a second capital next to Winchester, especially in regard to the rather recent unification of Mercia and Wessex.¹⁰⁶ During his reign, a new Latinised name was coined, *urbs Achumanensis* and *Civitas Aquamania*, which again linked Roman past and Anglo-Saxon present, but which also enhanced the connection to Aachen.¹⁰⁷

To stage Edgar's consecration and emphasise all its (political and religious) connotations, the minster had to undergo some refurbishment. A charter by King Eadwig already refers to the wonderful construction, but the most important addition was the 'westwork'.¹⁰⁸ This nineteenth-century term refers to the Carolingian *castellum* or *turis* at the west end of a church, which was a prominent addition in the ninth and tenth centuries. The oldest example to survive dates from c.873 to 885 and stands in Corvey, Westphalia, consisting of multiple storeys between two towers. Even without its twelfth-century additions, the westwork is an impressive structure that provided a magnificent entrance into the main body of the church. The functions of these constructions had been much debated. Scholars have claimed that they must have had a political dimension due to their towering and imposing nature.¹⁰⁹ It is far more likely, however, that these were additions to satisfy liturgical demands: '[t]hey were in fact an ingenious solution to the problem of how to

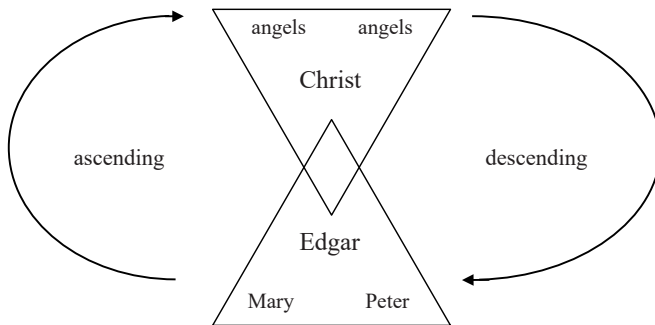
combine an impressive entrance to the church with a liturgical focus at the west end of the building'.¹¹⁰ Continental examples show that the upper chambers of these westworks housed an altar dedicated to the Saviour around which the congregation would gather to celebrate Easter. At the end of the tenth century, however, it was no longer considered a suitable place for the Saviour's altar; instead, altars dedicated to St Michael were set up there.¹¹¹ By combining political and liturgical aspects, the westwork at Bath was the architectural expression of Edgar's imperial aspirations. Politically, the very height of the addition made a statement in regard to the dimensions of Edgar's power and his rulership *totius Albionis*. Liturgically, the king entered the church as *vicarius Christi*, a status enhanced by the religious setting: marching from the western entrance to the main altar in the east, that is towards the crucified Christ, symbolised the coming together of the two spheres as the earthly king approaches the heavenly one.

The architectural stage of a ritual informs the ritual itself, but is also informed by it: 'a building may intensify ritual representation of temporal progression and social hierarchy, for example, by establishing progressions and hierarchies in space'.¹¹² The connection of any given society with its past is reinforced by the associations evoked by a particular stage: the site of Bath connected Anglo-Saxon England with Roman Britain by historically combining two eras and politically combining two empires. This sense of being situated within a certain teleological time frame is further emphasised through the liturgy. The very fact that the *ordo* is an old one, that it had been used at previous coronations, establishes continuity and a connection with the past. Thus, the architectural setting served primarily to assert hegemonial and secular claims, and only secondarily to connect the earthly king with the heavenly one. It is in the contemporary manuscript depictions of kings that this second connection is stressed.

Anglo-Saxon ruler portraits are rare; there are only about twenty surviving ruler portraits on various media, five of them in manuscripts.¹¹³ Their analysis yields important insights into political ideologies of that time, apart from revealing some superb craftsmanship. In essence, they are pictorial manifestations of christocentric kingship, at which centre lies the understanding of Christ as crowned king. Its probably oldest depiction can be found in the *Benedictional* of Æthelwold, commissioned between 963 and 984, where Christ sits enthroned and wearing a gold diadem. The jewelled diadem was one of the most prominent medieval insignia of kingship, and hence characterises the wearer as *Christus Rex*.¹¹⁴ In the depiction of Christ's baptism in the same manuscript, one can also see that angels from heaven bestow royal insignia of crown and sceptre onto Christ, while the dove anoints him with two ampullae simultaneously as *rex et sacerdos*.¹¹⁵ The facing folio with the Adoration of the Magi, all depicted wearing crowns and the first of them presenting three diadems to Christ, suggests imperial connotations.¹¹⁶ Thus, in two dominant stages of Christ's life, the artist included carefully wrought Anglo-Saxon ruler propaganda: the imperial claim of (Edgar's) rulership and the parallelism between Christ the king in Heaven and Edgar the king on Earth.

There are two further portraits that show Edgar's aspirations. The frontispiece of the New Minster refoundation charter (S 745) shows Edgar offering the golden charter to Christ. Edgar is flanked by the Virgin Mary holding a cross and a palm leaf, and St Peter holding a key. Christ sits in a mandorla, which is held by four angels. He is depicted blessing Edgar with his right hand and holding a book in his left. Here, an important link is established between Edgar's charter and Christ's book that mirrors Edgar's expulsion

of the secular clerics and his installation of monks at Winchester. The frontispiece visually parallels Edgar and Christ in regard to the important royal duty of passing judgement: Edgar pronounces secular judgements as laid down in the refoundation charter just as Christ pronounces in the Last Judgement as laid down in the Book of Life.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, there is an underlying note of intercession: the attributes of Peter and Mary show them to be Edgar's intercessors, and the blessing of Christ suggests that with the presentation of the charter Edgar has indeed achieved salvation.¹¹⁸ The content of the charter further suggests a liturgical function: the emphasis on cleansing the minster and installing new monks evokes notions of renewal and purification, similar to the dedication of churches.¹¹⁹ The figure of King Edgar represents his royal authority, but also the corporate body of the minster which is in turn complemented by Edgar's title of *vicarius Christi*: Edgar is represented as being an intermediary ruler between the abbot of the New Minster and Christ in heaven.¹²⁰ Thus, Edgar stands at the centre where both secular and religious realm meet. This is illustrated by a schematisation of the frontispiece:¹²¹



The composition of the two triangles suggests a motion of coming together: Christ is approaching Edgar as Edgar is approaching Christ, despite Christ being static. Similar to the procession from the westwork to the altar during Edgar's coronation at Bath, we have here a pictorial impression of the same movement. Edgar reaches out towards Christ, his body appears longer than those of the Virgin and Peter. He is literally reaching into the heavenly sphere, thus achieving a merging of both realms and, more importantly, placing his kingship as close to Christ's as possible.

The second portrait of Edgar can be found in the *Regularis Concordia*. The picture is divided into two halves: below, a monk is looking upwards while girding himself with a scroll; above, Edgar is sitting between Dunstan and Æthelwold, staring out of the picture, and all three of them also hold the scroll. The scroll is always taken to be the *Regularis Concordia*, thereby bestowing a distinct authorial function on the three sitting figures.¹²² A comparison to a portrait of Otto II (or III) in the Aachen Gospels, however, suggests a further meaning. The white scroll is actually the Veil of the Tabernacle, a symbol of the sky separating Earth from Heaven.¹²³ Within the church, the veil originally separated the sanctuary from the Holy of Holies, creating a twofold division of the church with men below and angels and saints above, which in turn suggests the twofold nature of Christ.¹²⁴ Furthermore, in both depictions, the veil was placed where the ruler was anointed, dividing him into ordinary man and *Christus domini*.¹²⁵ This again suggests the twofold nature of kingship referring to Edgar as man and Edgar as *vicarius Christi*.

The seating arrangement in the *Regularis Concordia* depiction has drawn considerable attention. The presentation of the king and his two ecclesiastics not only as co-authors but rather as co-rulers implies mutual assimilation, with each one mirroring the role and attributes of the other.¹²⁶ The idea of co-rulership between bishop and king is suggested in Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Oswaldi*: Edgar is said to have placed two crowns on Oswald's head, one for the episcopacy of the Mercians, the other for Northumbria.¹²⁷ This bestowed an imperial character onto Oswald, which is further enhanced by his mission to Rome to receive the pallium.¹²⁸ The spiritual authority of Oswald allows for his co-enthronement with Edgar while he is also characterised as Edgar's minister.¹²⁹ Similarly, the co-enthronement of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Edgar symbolises joint rulership of spiritual and earthly kingdoms, with the power of each deriving from the same source, Christ.¹³⁰ This image, then, presents the clearest pictorial instance of an equilibrium of powers, of co-rulership between the heads of the secular and religious realms, of the total fusion of both spheres. Here, Edgar achieved what was only hinted at in the charter frontispiece: the king has reached Christ.

There are many more manuscript depictions from the early medieval period that shed light on kingship ideologies.¹³¹ The aspects they reveal complement written sources, but often also surpass them due to their rich symbolism. The purple coloured background of the New Minster charter's frontispiece, for example, symbolises earthly and celestial kingship but also transformation, and thus combines and unites the two kings in one common frame.¹³² The themes and motifs in the illustrations also reveal foreign sources and analogues, thus hinting at common underlying concepts. The two depictions of Edgar, then, are as much innovation as tradition, taking established aspects and endowing them with new meaning. Within the overall framework of the ecclesiastical transformation of rulership, Edgar's in particular, the two illuminations disclose its success: through his deeds as well as moral character, Edgar has indeed become a worthy *vicarius Christi*. The culmination and success of his transformation is expressed in his coronation ritual. The many aspects of its architectural stage are as suggestive of this new kingship concept as the liturgical content of the actual ceremony: Edgar has become the epitome of christo-centric rulership.

Conclusion

The changed concepts of kingship, and the close relationship between secular and religious spheres, finds its clearest expression in the development of the coronation ritual. The extant sources reveal progress from simple ruler acclamation to an intricate liturgical ritual. King-making was ritualised but also Christianised, so much so that an unanointed king was no king at all. Over the course of time, the rituals themselves as well as their elements changed; they were reinterpreted and adjusted to serve certain political needs. Nevertheless, they developed towards expressing the king as vicar of Christ, as a *christus* himself.

The ecclesiastical influence on kingship and political concepts is most obvious in this step of king-making. Over the course of time, the Church gained more and more control and, consequently, the coronation, consecration and anointing rituals became increasingly liturgified. Although this opened up a number of issues concerning the status of the king,

anointing became the essential requirement of kingship. In general, this ritual had two functions: first, it enhanced the status of kingship by restricting it to legitimately born kings and by elevating kings as the Lord's anointed above everyone else. Second, the ritual was used to bind the king to religious and secular spheres, and to create obligations and conditions of kingship. Essentially, it expressed the divine origin of royal authority, but also imposed the duty of good kingship so that further divine favours would be merited. The prayers during the ritual, as well as the *Promissio regis* uttered before all, serve as a reminder that kingship is a privilege and duty, a right that has to be earned but cannot be claimed. As was demonstrated with Edgar's coronation at Bath, such a ritual also functioned to articulate a ruler's claim to authority, in this case, Edgar's hegemonial ambitions. These ambitions were expressed not only through his rulership over all Anglo-Saxon England and his alliances with British kings, but also through architecture and manuscript illuminations. Both art forms highlight how Anglo-Saxon kings developed from pagan *bretwaldas* to Christian rulers, from kings through blood to kings through Christ. Ritual and art combined also reveal how close both spheres really were; indeed, that it would be a fallacy to speak of separate secular and religious realms. Instead, through the ecclesiastical transformation, Anglo-Saxon rulers achieved a closeness to the divine that was unparalleled and, in regard to the developments of the later Middle Ages, would remain unique.

Notes

- ¹ David Kertzer, 'Ritual, Politik und Macht', pp. 377–379, in Andrea Belliger and David J. Krieger (eds.), *Ritualtheorien: Ein einführendes Handbuch* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003), pp. 365–390; see also Corinna Dörrich, *Poetik des Rituals: Konstruktion und Funktion politischen Handelns in mittelalterlicher Literatur* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002), p. 52.
- ² Catherine Bell, *Ritual* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 74 (the term 'social drama' goes back to Victor Turner).
- ³ Dörrich, *Poetik des Rituals*, p. 17.
- ⁴ Bell, *Ritual*, p. 133.
- ⁵ Philippe Buc, 'Chronisten und das politische Ritual', p. 35, in Bernhard Jussen (ed.), *Die Macht des Königs: Herrschaft in Europa vom Frühmittelalter bis in die Neuzeit* (München: Beck, 2005), pp. 27–37.
- ⁶ Buc, 'Chronisten und das politische Ritual', p. 31.
- ⁷ Herwig Wolfram, 'Lateinische Herrschertitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert', p. 44, in Wolfram (ed.), *Intitulatio II. Lateinische Herrscher- und Fürstentitel im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert*. MIOG-Ergänzungsband 24 (Graz: Böhlau, 1973), pp. 19–177.
- ⁸ Walter Ullmann, 'Der Souveränitätsgedanke in den mittelalterlichen Krönungs-ordines', p. 78, in Ullmann, *The Church and the Law in the Earlier Middle Ages: Selected Essays* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1975), Essay VI, pp. 72–89 (original pagination).
- ⁹ Ernst Kantorowicz, *'Laudes Regiae': A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1946), p. 78. The episcopal unction was unknown in Rome and Byzantium until the ninth century.
- ¹⁰ Kantorowicz, *Laudes*, p. 78. For the differences between the Eastern and Western rites, see Janet Nelson, 'Symbols in Context: Rulers' Inauguration Rituals in Byzantium and the West in the Early Middle Ages Symbols in Context', in Janet L. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London: Hambledon Press, 1986), pp. 259–281. The origin of the ritual of royal anointing has been further investigated by Enright who argues for a distinct Irish influence on the Frankish ritual, emphasising that the link between the anointing ritual and baptism were decisive for the

Frankish acceptance of the validity of the rite rather than its Old Testament parallels (*Iona, Tara, Soissons*). Jacobson also analyses sources for Carolingian royal anointing and charts the development of the surrounding liturgy, drawing on conciliar canons and sacramentaries (Paul Jacobson, 'Sicut Samuēl unxit David: Early Carolingian Royal Anointings Reconsidered', in Lizette Larson-Miller [ed.], *Medieval Liturgy. A Book of Essays* [New York and London: Garland, 1997], pp. 267–303). Ultimately, he makes the same point as Enright, that is baptism rather than Old Testament anointings provided the model for Pippin's anointing.

¹¹ Kantorowicz, *Laudes*, p. 78.

¹² I Sam. 16.12–13: 'And the Lord said: Arise, and anoint him, for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.'

¹³ I Sam. 10.9: 'God gave him another heart.'

¹⁴ Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1967, 2nd ed.), pp. 149f.

¹⁵ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 154.

¹⁶ Walter Ullmann, *The Carolingian Renaissance and the Idea of Kingship*. The Birkbeck Lectures 1968–69 (London: Methuen, 1969), p. 107.

¹⁷ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, p. 154.

¹⁸ Priests and emperors were anointed by pouring oil over their heads, but, in addition, the hands of the priests were anointed and a gospel-book placed on their shoulders. See Karl F. Morrison for a comparison of ecclesiastical and royal anointing (*The Two Kingdoms. Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964], pp. 191–196).

¹⁹ I Peter 2.9: 'But you are a chosen generation, a *kingly priesthood*, a holy nation, a purchased people: that you may declare his virtues, who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light' (my emphasis).

²⁰ *Etym.* VII. 2.2–4: 'He is named "Christ" (Christus) from "chrisim" (chrisma), that is, "anointed one," for it was a precept among the Jews that they would confect a sacred ointment by which those who were called to the priesthood or the kingship might be anointed. Just as nowadays for kings to be clothed in the purple is the mark of royal dignity, so for them anointing with sacred ointment would confer the royal title and power. Hence they are called "anointed ones" (christus) from chrisim, which is unction, 3. for the Greek chrisma is "unction" (unctio) in Latin. When this anointing was done spiritually, it accommodated the name "Christ" to the Lord, because he was anointed by the Spirit from God the Father, as in Acts (4:27): "For there assembled together in this city against thy holy child . . . whom thou hast anointed" – by no means with visible oil, but by the gift of grace, for which visible ointment is a sign. 4. "Christ" is not, however, a proper name of the Savior, but a common-noun designation of his power. When he is called "Christ," it is a common designation of his importance, but when he is called "Jesus Christ" it is the proper name of the Savior' (trsl. Stephen A. Barney, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], p. 155).

²¹ Arnold Angenendt, 'Rex et Sacerdos. Zur Genese der Königssalbung', pp. 103f, in Norbert Kamp and J. Wollasch (eds.), *Tradition als historische Kraft. Interdisziplinäre Forschungen zur Geschichte des frühen Mittelalters* (Berlin: deGruyter, 1982), pp. 100–118.

²² Bede, *In psalmorum librum exegesis* (PL 93 col. 613f): 'We also read that under the Old Law only two people were anointed, the king and the priest. In these two persons the future one king and priest is prefigured, that is Christ, whose name derives from *chrisim*. He is king because he governs and directs us, and he is priest because he intercedes with his Father for us. [. . .] and he makes us his members so that we can become christi [anointed ones] in Christ [the anointed one]. Since the whole Christ comprises the head as well as the members, the unction does not only pertain to him alone but to us too. That is why it is said: You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood [1 Petr. 2.9]' (trsl. adapted and extended from Angenendt, *Zur Genese der Königssalbung*, p. 104).

²³ Angenendt, *Zur Genese der Königssalbung*, p. 105.

²⁴ Bryan D. Spinks, *Early and Medieval Rituals and Theologies of Baptism: From the New Testament to the Council of Trent*. Liturgy, Worship and Society Series (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 10.

- ²⁵ Janet Nelson, 'National Synods, Kingship as Office, and Royal Anointing: an Early Medieval Syndrome', p. 250, in Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp. 239–257.
- ²⁶ Robert Deshman, 'Otto III and the Warmund Sacramentary. A Study in Political Theology', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 34 (1971), pp. 1–20, here p. 5.
- ²⁷ Deshman, *Warmund Sacramentary*, p. 14.
- ²⁸ I Sam. 10. 6: 'And the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon you, [. . .] and [you] shall be changed into another man.'
- ²⁹ See Andreas Kosuch, 'A *deo electus*? Klerus und Volk als Verkünder des göttlichen Willens bei der Königserhebung des frühen Mittelalters. Von Wirkung und Wandel einer alten Vorstellung', in Franz-Reiner Erkens (ed.), *Das frühmittelalterliche Königtum*. RGA-Ergänzungsband 49 (Berlin and New York: deGruyter, 2005), pp. 407–426; also Ullmann, *Souveränitätsgedanke*, pp. 72–89.
- ³⁰ Kantorowicz, *Laudes*, esp. pp. 78–83. The following is a summary.
- ³¹ Taken from Ullmann, *Souveränitätsgedanke*, p. 83 (original emphasis): 'Your hands are anointed so that you may be blessed and appointed king in your kingdom over your people, which your Lord God gave you to rule and govern' (trsl. K.McC.).
- ³² Ullmann, *Souveränitätsgedanke*, p. 83. Cf. the discussion of the *gratia Dei* formula in chapter 2.
- ³³ Wolfram, *Lateinische Herrschertitel*, p. 62.
- ³⁴ For the indelible character, see Walter Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1966, 2nd ed.), pp. 140–145; for the royal unction as sacrament, see Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 73–78.
- ³⁵ But see Nelson, who argues for a strong participation of the Frankish magnates and aristocracy in the royal anointing ritual ('The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual', in Janet L. Nelson, *The Frankish World, 750–900* [London: Hambledon, 1996], pp. 99–131).
- ³⁶ See Ullmann, *Papal Government*, pp. 157–165. For a more detailed description of the consecration and its context of Charles the Bald, see Ullmann, *Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 77–101.
- ³⁷ Ullmann, *Papal Government*, pp. 225–228, here p. 228.
- ³⁸ Nelson, 'National Synods', pp. 251f.
- ³⁹ Nelson, 'National Synods', p. 253.
- ⁴⁰ Acts of the Synod of Fismes 881 (PL 125, col. 1071): 'So much greater is the responsibility of the priesthood in that they must render account in God's judgement even for the very kings of men, and by so much greater are the rank and prestige of bishops than of kings because kings are consecrated to their kingship by bishops, but bishops cannot be consecrated by kings' (trsl. Nelson, *National Synods*, p. 253).
- ⁴¹ Kantorowicz, *Laudes*, p. 142. See also Janet Nelson, 'Kingship, Law and Liturgy in the Political Thought of Hincmar of Rheims', *English Historical Review* 92 (1977), pp. 241–277, here p. 247–250.
- ⁴² Kantorowicz, *Laudes*, p. 142. St Paul in Hebr. 7.7: 'And without all contradiction, that which is less is blessed by the better.'
- ⁴³ Janet Nelson, 'The Earliest Surviving Royal Ordo: Some Liturgical and Historical Aspects', pp. 47f, in Brian Tierney and Peter Linehan (eds.), *Authority and Power: Studies on Medieval Law and Government Presented to Walter Ullmann on his Seventieth Birthday* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 29–48. The earliest *ordo* is preserved in three manuscripts, the Leofric Missal (Oxford, Bodleian MS 579), the Egbert Pontifical (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale MS lat. 10575) and the Lanalet Pontifical (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale MS A.27); accordingly, the *ordines* are referred to as Leofric, Egbert or Lanalet *ordo* (ibid. 29f). The first *ordo* was incorporated into the second English *ordo*, which survives in two versions; see Janet Nelson, 'The Second English Ordo', in Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp. 361–374.
- ⁴⁴ See, e.g., Nelson, *Earliest Surviving Royal 'Ordo'*, pp. 29–48; Nelson, *Second English 'Ordo'*, pp. 361–374; Nelson, 'The First Use of Second Anglo-Saxon Ordo', in Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham (eds.), *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicolas Brooks* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 117–126; and Cornelius A. Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning: the*

- Development of the Latin Ritual for the Anointing of Kings and the Coronation of an Emperor before the Eleventh Century* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1957).
- ⁴⁵ Joanne Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c.750–870* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 261–272. The manuscript is St Petersburg, National Library of Russia, MS Q.v.XVI.1.
- ⁴⁶ Story, *Carolingian Connections*, pp. 261–265.
- ⁴⁷ Story, *Carolingian Connections*, p. 261. The half-sketched person between David and Samuel is not part of the original drawing (p. 265).
- ⁴⁸ Story, *Carolingian Connections*, pp. 261–272.
- ⁴⁹ In his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede refers to royal insignia on only a few occasions (e.g. in III.1 and 19, V.19), but does not employ any distinct phrases. Cf. the discussion of such vocabulary in the charters below.
- ⁵⁰ Haddan and Stubbs, pp. 453f: 'In the twelfth chapter we decreed that in the ordination of kings no one shall permit the assent of evil men to prevail, but kings are to be lawfully chosen by the priests and elders of the people, and are not to be those begotten in adultery or incest; for just as in our times according to the canons a bastard cannot attain to priesthood, so neither can he who was not born of a legitimate marriage be the Lord's anointed and king of the whole kingdom and inheritor of the land. [. . .] Let no one dare to conspire to kill a king, for he is the Lord's anointed' (trsl. EHD I no. 191).
- ⁵¹ *Chronicon* III. 3, IV.1, 4, 5 and 9. It is interesting to note that there is no explicit reference to Athelstan's coronation. One wonders if this is a silent reference to the problems around Athelstan's succession. Cf. Nelson, *First Use of Second Anglo-Saxon 'Ordo'*, pp. 117–126.
- ⁵² Interestingly, he does not mention the consecration of Offa's son at all. The only reference to Ecgrifith is in III.1: 'Ecgrifith suus filius successit in regnum' ('and Ecgrifith, his son, succeeded to the kingdom').
- ⁵³ Æthelweard follows his sources rather closely, mainly the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, so that these additions suggest references to a customary practice among Wessex kings (*Chronicon*, xvii–xxxvii).
- ⁵⁴ Leo's letter to Æthelwulf (EHD I no. 219), Asser, ch. 8, *Chronicon* III.4, ASC A, B, C 853 (C 854).
- ⁵⁵ Janet Nelson, 'The Problem of King Alfred's Anointing', pp. 324f, in Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp. 309–327.
- ⁵⁶ Nelson, 'Alfred's Anointing', pp. 311–315.
- ⁵⁷ S 325: 'Also, I here make known that I have confirmed this privilege before St Peter in Rome and the holy father Leo in the way it was settled by me and all people in England before I went to Rome. That is, that all these privileges for one hide ought to be kept forever, because God's privilege shall ever be free like any worldly privilege. And I had my son Alfred with me, and he was hallowed/consecrated/ordained king there, then he [Alfred] pledged to the Pope that he would always promote this privilege and to urge his children, if God grant him any, to do the same' (trsl. K.McC.).
- ⁵⁸ This charter might also be loosely connected to the charter group known as Æthelwulf's decimation charters in its reference to the freedom of this and other similar privileges; see Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Malmesbury Abbey*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 65–91. Unfortunately, the Winchester Old Minster archive has not yet been fully examined so that further information on this particular charter is not available.
- ⁵⁹ *Chronicon* IV.3, Asser, ch. 42, ASC C 872, A, D, E 871.
- ⁶⁰ See ASC 978, *Mercian Register* 924.
- ⁶¹ CH II.1 *Nativity of the Lord*: 'How is he anointed? A king is anointed with hallowed oil, when he is hallowed for king; and in every ordination, as well as in deaconhood and in bishophood, he who is invested therewith is anointed with hallowed oil. But Christ is Bishop of all bishops, and of all kings King. He is not anointed with earthly oil, but with the sevenfold grace of the Holy Ghost; for in Christ dwells bodily all perfection of the Godhead' (trsl. Benjamin Thorpe, *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: The First Part, Containing the Sermones Catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric*. 2 Vols. [London: Printed for the Ælfric Society, 1843–1846], Vol. II, pp. 14f).

- ⁶² Mary Clayton, 'The Old English *Promissio regis*', *Anglo-Saxon England* 38 (2009), pp. 91–150, here p. 91.
- ⁶³ Clayton, *Old English 'Promissio regis'*, discussion, pp. 107–113, text pp. 148f.
- ⁶⁴ 'The Christian king who observes these things will earn for himself worldly honour and eternal God will have mercy on him both in this present life and also in the eternal which will never come to an end. If he fails to fulfil that which was promised to God, then within a very short time after that things will grow worse among his people, and in the end it will all turn out for the worst, unless he previously make amends for it in his lifetime. O beloved lord, eagerly protect yourself at least! Remember frequently that you will have to present and lead forth the flock of which you are appointed shepherd in this life and then will have to declare how you ruled that which Christ himself had previously purchased with his blood' (trsl. Clayton, *Old English 'Promissio regis'*, pp. 148f).
- ⁶⁵ Clayton, *Old English 'Promissio regis'*, p. 125. She also provides a wealth of detail on kings as shepherds (pp. 118–122).
- ⁶⁶ 'whatever they do unjustly by means of his might, he must give a reckoning on judgement day for all of it' (trsl. Clayton, *Old English 'Promissio regis'*, pp. 148f).
- ⁶⁷ Clayton, *Old English 'Promissio regis'*, p. 106; the discussion of the sources and analogues of each section is on pp. 107–130.
- ⁶⁸ Clayton, *Old English 'Promissio regis'*, pp. 131–147.
- ⁶⁹ Nelson, *Second English 'Ordo'*, pp. 369f.
- ⁷⁰ ASC E 867: 'and they had deposed their king Osbert and taken a king with no hereditary right, Ælle'. Similarly, ASC D 774 and D 940.
- ⁷¹ Ælfric's statement on the irreversible character of royal elections springs to mind (CH I.14 *Palm Sunday*).
- ⁷² The terms and phrases are: *consecratus, ordinatus, unguere, sors, suffragium, electio, electus, constitutus, sortitus, coronatus, subthronizatus, solium, infula, galea, sceptrum, corona, nomine regis fungens, potitus* and *conferre*. See Table 5 'Consecration Vocabulary in Charters'. Post-conquest forgeries have been excluded from the discussion.
- ⁷³ While the word used is *preordinatus*, one has to bear in mind that it acquired the meaning of pre-arrangement only in the twelfth century.
- ⁷⁴ EHD I no. 83 (in the introduction to the text of S 186).
- ⁷⁵ Nelson, *Second English 'Ordo'*, p. 366 and Nelson, *First Use of Second Anglo-Saxon 'Ordo'*, p. 124. Cf. also *Mercian Register* 924.
- ⁷⁶ For accounts on Athelstan's coronation, see Nelson, *First Use of Second Anglo-Saxon 'Ordo'*, pp. 117–126.
- ⁷⁷ Janet Nelson, 'Inauguration Rituals', p. 65, in Peter Sawyer and Ian N. Wood (eds.), *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds: The Editors, 1977), pp. 50–71.
- ⁷⁸ The *Coronation of Edgar*, in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* s.a. 973: 'In this year Edgar, ruler of the English, with a great company, was consecrated king in the ancient borough *Acemannesceaster* – the men who dwell in this island also call it by another name, Bath. There great joy had come to all on that blessed day which the children of men call and name the day of Pentecost. There was assembled a crowd of priests, a great throng of learned men, as I have heard tell [. . .]' (trsl. EHD I no. 1).
- ⁷⁹ Nelson, *Inauguration Rituals*, p. 64.
- ⁸⁰ Eric John, *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), pp. 287f, referring back to Luke 3.23.
- ⁸¹ Catherine E. Karkov, *The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England*. Anglo-Saxon Studies Vol. 3 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), p. 88.
- ⁸² Nelson, *Inauguration Rituals*, pp. 66–70. I summarise her arguments here.
- ⁸³ Harald Kleinschmidt, 'Die Titulaturen englischer Könige im 10. und 11. Jahrhundert Titulaturen englischer Könige', p. 125, in Herwig Wolfram and Anton Scharer (eds.), *Intitulatio III: Lateinische Herrschertitel und Herrschertitulaturen vom siebten bis zum dreizehnten Jahrhundert*. MiÖG-Ergänzungsband 29 (Wien: Böhlau, 1988), pp. 75–130.

- ⁸⁴ Nelson, *Inauguration Rituals*, p. 68. On the setting of the consecration, see the next section.
- ⁸⁵ See also ASC D 973 (972) and S 826 in which Edgar states that all of Britain far and wide was put under his power ('*tocius Bryttannie triviatim potitus reg[i]mine*').
- ⁸⁶ See above (the poem continues with a calculation of the years since the birth of Christ). *Æthelweard's Chronicon* does not add much information either (IV.9).
- ⁸⁷ Byrhtferht drew most of his information from the second English *ordo* (trsl. Michael Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgbwine* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009], p. 107 n. 59).
- ⁸⁸ IV.6: '[T]hey came for the entirely plausible reason, and hastened there with joy, that the venerable bishops should bless, anoint, and consecrate him – in Christ's bounty, out of Whom and from Whom proceeded the hallowed anointing of the highest blessing and of holy religion. Then the glory of the distinguished occasion drew nigh, and the solemnity of the Holy Spirit was present, when these things were performed, when everyone came together to consecrate the renowned king, whose sceptre-bearing glory then shone more brightly, whose golden diadem then glistened, whose beauty could be compared to metallic gold' (trsl. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey*, p. 107). The further description of the ceremony is based on this edition IV.7.
- ⁸⁹ Ps. 89: 14–15: 'Let thy hand be strengthened and thy right hand exalted.'
- ⁹⁰ IV.7: 'I promise in the first instance that the Church of God and the entire Christian populace shall under my authority keep true peace at all times; I also promise that I shall proscribe theft and all manner of wickedness for persons of all stations; and thirdly, that in all judgements I shall enjoin justice and mercy, so that our kind and merciful God shall grant His mercy to me and you' (trsl. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey*, p. 109).
- ⁹¹ IV.7: 'And Sadoc the priest, and Nathan the prophet have anointed Solomon king in Gihon' (trsl. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey*, p. 109).
- ⁹² E.g., in the prayer immediately before/during the anointing; in the prayer during bestowal of the sceptre and in the coronation blessing; cf. D. H. Turner, *The Claudius Pontificals* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1971), pp. 89–95.
- ⁹³ Turner, *Claudius Pontificals*, p. 94: 'Stand firm and assert the place, which you have owned until now from paternal succession and which was conferred unto you out of hereditary law through the authority of God and us, that is every bishop and all other servants of God, so that the mediator between God and humankind confirms you as mediator between clergy and people on this throne of this realm and allows you to rule with him in the eternal realm' (adapted from a German trsl. K.McC.).
- ⁹⁴ For Ullmann, this is the exact moment when the king emerges as *persona mixta*, being both ecclesiastical and lay (*Carolingian Renaissance*, pp. 107f).
- ⁹⁵ Taken from the Mainzer *ordo* (Percy E. Schramm, 'Die Krönung in Deutschland bis zum Beginn des Salischen Hauses (1028)', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* [Kanonistische Abteilung] 24 [1935], pp. 309–321): 'deserves to rule without end with the Saviour of the world, whom you embody in name and office' (adapted from a German trsl. K.McC.).
- ⁹⁶ Ruin, ll.1–2, 9b–11, 21–24 & 31b–41: 'Wondrously ornate is the stone of this wall, shattered by fate; the precincts of the city have crumbled and the work of giants is rotting away. [. . .] There were bright city buildings, many bathhouses, a wealth of lofty gables, much clamour of the multitude, many a mead-hall filled with human revelry – until mighty Fate changed that. [. . .] The site is fallen into ruin, reduced to heaps, where once many a man blithe of mood and bright with gold, clothed in splendours, proud and flown with wine, gleamed in his war-trappings, and gazed upon treasure, on silver, on chased gems, on wealth, on property, on the precious stone and on this bright citadel of the broad kingdom; and the stone courts were standing and the stream warmly spouted its ample surge and a wall embraced all in its bright bosom where the baths were, hot at its heart. That was convenient' (trsl. S. A. J. Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* [London: Dent, 1995], p. 402).
- ⁹⁷ Timothy Darvill, Paul Stamper and Jane Timby, *England*. Oxford Archaeological Guides (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 374. Sulis is the Celtic equivalent to the Roman Minerva, goddess of wisdom, patroness of arts and crafts.

- ⁹⁸ ASC C 577: 'Her Cuðwine and Ceawlin fuhtan wið Bryttas and *iii* kingas ofslogan, Conmægl and Condan and Farinmægl, on þære stowe þe is gecweden Deorham, and genaman þreo ceastra on heom, Gleawceaster and Cyrenceaster and Baþanceaster.'
- ⁹⁹ Barry Cunliffe, 'Saxon Bath', p. 347. in Jeremy Haslam (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern England* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1984), pp. 345–358.
- ¹⁰⁰ Susan E. Kelly (ed.), *Charters of Bath and Wells*. Anglo-Saxon Charters 13 (Oxford: OUP, 2007), p. 2. The foundation charter dates to 675 (S 51; authentic basis), see no. 1, pp. 53–62.
- ¹⁰¹ S 148 (AD 796/ authentic): 'Et hoc gestum est in celebri vico qui Saxonice vocatur æt Baðum.' Cf. also S 210 (AD 864/authentic) by King Burgred: 'Scripta est autem huius donationis cartula in illo famoso urbe qui nominatur et calidum balneum. þæt is æt þæm hatum baðum.'
- ¹⁰² Kelly, *Bath Charters*, p. 9, see also Cunliffe, 'Saxon Bath', p. 350.
- ¹⁰³ Kelly, *Bath Charters*, p. 8.
- ¹⁰⁴ August Friedrich v. Pauly, *Paulys Real-encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Vol. II.1 (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1895), col. 300.
- ¹⁰⁵ Roger Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 71–73.
- ¹⁰⁶ Kelly, *Bath Charters*, p. 16.
- ¹⁰⁷ Kelly, *Bath Charters*, p. 16. The Latin names are in S 735 (AD 965/probably authentic) and S 785 (AD 972/probably authentic). The new names fell into disuse after Edgar's death.
- ¹⁰⁸ S 643 (AD 957/authentic): 'in Bathonia [monasterium] mira fabrica constructum'.
- ¹⁰⁹ Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, pp. 47–49.
- ¹¹⁰ Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, p. 49.
- ¹¹¹ Stalley, *Early Medieval Architecture*, pp. 47–49.
- ¹¹² Melissa T. Hause, 'A Place in Sacred History: Coronation Ritual and Architecture in Ottonian Mainz', *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6 (1992), pp. 133–157, here p. 134. She focuses on the Ottonian coronations staged in Mainz, but draws a similar connection between Charlemagne and Otto I–III as done here between Offa/Edgar and Charlemagne. However, since the coronation of Otto II took place 961 at Aachen, he might have been a closer role model for Edgar than Charlemagne. This is indeed borne out by the fact that since the time of King Athelstan, there existed strong ties with the Ottonian courts.
- ¹¹³ Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, p. 3.
- ¹¹⁴ Robert Deshman, '“Christus Rex et Magi Reges”: Kingship and Christology in Ottonian and Anglo-Saxon Art', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 10 (1976), pp. 367–405, here p. 368.
- ¹¹⁵ Deshman, *Kingship and Christology*, p. 399.
- ¹¹⁶ Deshman, *Kingship and Christology*, pp. 377–381. For a full treatment of the *Benedictional* see his *The Benedictional of Æthelwold* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
- ¹¹⁷ Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, p. 86.
- ¹¹⁸ Robert Deshman, 'Benedictus Monarcha et Monachus: Early Medieval Ruler Theology and the Anglo-Saxon Reform', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 22 (1988), pp. 204–40, here p. 223, and Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, p. 86.
- ¹¹⁹ Catherine E. Karkov, 'The Frontispiece to the New Minster Charter and the King's Two Bodies', p. 225, in Donald Scragg (ed.), *Edgar, King of the English 959–975: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), pp. 224–241.
- ¹²⁰ Karkov, *Frontispiece to the New Minster Charter*, pp. 225 and 235.
- ¹²¹ Following a verbal description in Karkov, *Frontispiece to the New Minster Charter*, p. 226.
- ¹²² Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, p. 95.
- ¹²³ Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 66f. While Karkov mentions this similarity, she does not elaborate upon it any further (*Ruler Portraits*, pp. 95f). There also seems to be confusion as to which Otto is actually depicted: for Karkov, it is the third while for Kantorowicz it is the second.
- ¹²⁴ Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, p. 69.
- ¹²⁵ Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies*, p. 74 (Otto's hands are below the veil because they were not anointed at his ceremony in 961, and probably only introduced between the 980s and 1000).
- ¹²⁶ Deshman, *Early Medieval Ruler Theology*, p. 207.

- ¹²⁷ *Vita S Oswaldi*, IV.5: 'Ipse [Edgar] autem dilexit miro affectu patrem Osualdum, cuius in capite duas coronas imposuit; hoc est contulit ipsi prius episcopatum Merciorum gentis, et postmodum, Northanymbrorum.'
- ¹²⁸ Deshman, *Early Medieval Ruler Theology*, p. 208.
- ¹²⁹ Deshman, *Early Medieval Ruler Theology*, p. 209. This episode reminds of Hincmar's statement that while bishops anoint kings, kings do not anoint bishops. Although episcopal anointment is not mentioned, the focus on Edgar bestowing the dignity on Oswald almost opposes the archbishop's dictum.
- ¹³⁰ Deshman, *Early Medieval Ruler Theology*, p. 210.
- ¹³¹ See further, for example, Robert Deshman, 'The Exalted Servant: The Ruler Theology of the Prayerbook of Charles the Bald', *Viator*, 11 (1980), pp. 385–432.
- ¹³² Karkov, *Frontispiece to the New Minster Charter*, p. 228.

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Conclusion

When King Æthelred died in 1016, a foreigner, the Dane Cnut, succeeded to the Anglo-Saxon throne.¹ His efforts to maintain continuity, politically as well as socially, are not only evinced through his marriage to Emma/Ælfgifu, which tied him to the royal house and bestowed English identity on him.² Instead, it is his almost complete submission and obedience to Archbishop Wulfstan that allowed for a successful rule and a positive image of the foreign king, so much so that one could see Cnut as a synthesis of Anglo-Saxon rulership ideology. His charters, as well as *Chronicle* entries and legal texts, evince both imperial aspirations as well as a decidedly ecclesiastical ruler image; aspects that had been of particular importance in regard to King Edgar.³

As king of England, Denmark, Norway and parts of Sweden, Cnut ruled over a larger territory than the Anglo-Saxon kings before him. Yet he also established a closer connection to Pope John XIX and to the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II, having witnessed the latter's consecration in 1027. The letter he sent to the people of England afterwards reveals how imperial his rule was: his negotiations for safe passage for English pilgrims with secular rulers, as well as his negotiations for decreasing the accrued costs for archbishops on receipt of their *pallium* with the pope, demonstrate the importance of his position as king but also the extent of his authority.⁴ Furthermore, he embodies the crucial dimensions of kingship: protection, defence and guardianship for his secular as well as ecclesiastical subjects. It is indeed his great concern for the welfare of the Christian religion and ecclesiastical institutions for which Cnut was known and esteemed. In a letter from Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, Cnut is praised for giving money to rebuild the church.⁵ The most prominent demonstration of his piety is, however, the frontispiece of the New Minster *Liber Vitae* (BL MS Stowe, 944, fol. 6r).⁶ Cnut and Emma/Ælfgifu are both depicted donating a cross to the New Minster, set below Christ, Mary and St Peter. The focus of this illumination is Emma/Ælfgifu, although the intention might have been to show them as equals as far as possible. With Cnut, the focus is on protection, symbolised by the sword in his left hand, thereby also pointing to the other main duty of kingship: justice. The crown on Cnut's head might be a reference to the imperial crown of Henry II which Cnut might have seen in 1027, thus suggesting another instance of Cnut's imperial aspirations.⁷

These aspirations are further borne out by his charters: he is styled either *basileus* or *imperator* in nine of the thirty-five surviving diplomas.⁸ Other functional titles used are

gubernator (twice), *rector* (four times) and *primicerius* (once), in addition to the general *rex* (twenty-six times, once as *cyning*). This distribution suggests then that the imperial connotations mattered more for Cnut than the expression of other dimensions of kingship. The scarcity of functional titles with ecclesiastical overtones is balanced by the usage of legitimisation formulas. In comparison with the charters of the Anglo-Saxon kings before him, Cnut's diplomas employ them with great frequency: twenty-one of his thirty-five charters use a variant of the *gratia Dei* formula.⁹ The focus on divine favour as the necessary element of kingship is hence proven by Cnut's charters, since here the legitimisation formula has not been used as marker of good kingship anymore but as general element of any rulership.¹⁰

This brief survey shows that Cnut modelled himself very consciously on Edgar, or, one might add, on a certain portrayal of Edgar as an imperial ruler moulded after an ecclesiastical understanding of Christian kingship. Cnut's depiction in the *Liber Vitae* is a development of Edgar's imagery, which further enhances the similarities between both rulers.¹¹ It is, of course, obvious why Cnut would choose Edgar as his role model rather than his immediate predecessor Æthelred. Yet the surviving documents convey the impression that Cnut came as *tabula rasa* to the English throne, and was then transformed by people like Wulfstan into an ecclesiastically informed ruler-type, a king holding sway over a vast territory but whose foremost concerns were matters of the church. The peace and stability his reign brought resulted in a reformed and also renewed society, Wulfstan's Holy Society, and the foreign king became an Anglo-Saxon vicar of Christ.

While Cnut might be seen as the culmination of the development of Anglo-Saxon political thought, its beginnings must be sought on the Continent. Early medieval political theory was indebted to Byzantine and Christian thought, in particular to those concepts that developed out of the struggles for supremacy between popes and emperors. The Carolingian Empire of the ninth century serves as prime example of how such concepts were implemented in the practical world of rulership. The close connection to Rome resulted in the stunted sovereignty of the Carolingian kings and in a strong Carolingian episcopate, which eventually led to the submission of the Holy Roman Emperor to the pope. In Anglo-Saxon England, however, these two spheres of authority developed along different lines. From the Conversion onwards, the episcopate had to struggle for its share of authority, and it never succeeded in gaining superiority over Anglo-Saxon kings. While essentially Anglo-Saxon kingship did not differ greatly from its continental counterparts, there were unique political features which came to influence general concepts and developments. The strong religiosity of the early kings and their emphasis of education, for example, resulted in an understanding of kingship as being divinely bestowed but elevated, not stunted. Kings were able to manipulate religious teaching and the ecclesiastical authority to further their own ends. Various functional charter titles refer to an ecclesiastical background, yet kings used this to express their own understanding of kingship, as educators, guardians or protectors of their people. Similarly, the legitimisation formulas emphasise the divine element in kingship, yet they enhance the royal status by being a marker of good Christian kingship. With the tenth century, the Anglo-Saxon episcopate gained more power and influence than before, and the Benedictine Reform movement afforded the unique opportunity to model the ruler according to an ecclesiastical concept of rulership. While King Edgar was an enthusiastic supporter and emulator of such ideas, royal support or enthusiasm did not result in a submission of royal *potestas*

to episcopal *autoritas*. Instead, the king moved even closer to the divine sphere, becoming the *vicarius Christi*, and both the secular and the religious realms merged into one Christian kingdom. Thus, the overarching frame of theocracy reveals a distinct Anglo-Saxon kingship concept that was indeed theocratic but also almost absolutist.

Notes

- ¹ See Timothy Bolton, *Cnut the Great* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), esp. chapters 2, 6–10 for a discussion on Cnut's kingship, and also Bolton, *The Empire of Cnut the Great: Conquest and the Consolidation of Power in Northern Europe in the Early Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).
- ² Cf. Catherine E. Karkov, *The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England*. Anglo-Saxon Studies Vol. 3 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), p. 119.
- ³ E.g. charters: S 949–984 (S 985–992 are writs); ASC 1027; for Edgar as role model to Cnut see, e.g., Cnut's letter to the people of England §13 (EHD I no. 48) and a version of the preface to Cnut's laws (EHD I no. 47).
- ⁴ Cnut's letter is EHD I no. 53. See especially §§ 5–8.
- ⁵ EHD I no. 233.
- ⁶ This illumination is discussed in Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, pp. 119–145.
- ⁷ Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, pp. 123–137.
- ⁸ S 949–984 (S 965 is a post-1066 forgery and has been excluded; he is usually styled *cyning* in the writs, S 985–995). The title *basileus* is used in S 956 (AD 1019/original), 959 (AD 1023/spurious), 961 (AD 1024/original), 963 (AD 1031/possibly original), 964 (AD 1032/perhaps authentic), 971 (AD 1031/possibly original), 972 (AD 1033/spurious), 977 (AD 1021 x 1023/original); *imperator* in S 952 (AD 1018/spurious).
- ⁹ S 949 (AD 1017 x 1032/authentic), 952 (AD 1018/spurious), 953 (AD 1018/spurious; authentic elements), 955 (AD 1019/authentic), 957 (AD 1020/spurious), 959 (AD 1023/spurious), 961 (AD 1024/original), 964 (AD 1032/perhaps authentic), 967 (AD 1033/spurious; authentic elements), 968 (AD 1033/authentic), 971 (AD 1031/possibly original), 972 (AD 1033/spurious), 973 (AD 1034/perhaps authentic), 974 (AD 1035/original), 975 (AD 1035/authentic), 976 (AD 1035/probably spurious), 977 (AD 1021 x 1023/original), 979 (AD 1023 x 1032/probably authentic), 980 (AD 1021 x 1023/spurious; authentic basis), 982 (AD 1028 x 1035/suspicious) and 984 (AD 1020 x 1022/suspicious).
- ¹⁰ The *Chronicle* is not particularly forthcoming with details on Cnut's reign, which strengthens the impression of a very peaceful period. It is thus difficult to establish any relationship between historical event and usage of legitimization formula, as done in chapter 2. One could thus see the frequency of their employment as overall evaluation of Cnut's kingship as within the prescribed Christian parameters of good rulership.
- ¹¹ Karkov, *Ruler Portraits*, p. 133.

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Appendix 1: Anglo-Saxon Kings

The Kings of East Anglia

East Anglian Rule

Wehha

Wuffa (son of Wehha) 571–578

Tyttla (son of Wuffa) 578–593

Rædwald (son of Tyttla) 593–617

Eni (son of Tyttla) 617–618

Eorpwald (son of Rædwald) 618–628

Ricbert 628–631

Sigebert (St.) (son of Rædwald) 631–634

Egric (son of Eni) 634–635

Anna (nephew of Rædwald) 635–654

Æthelhere (brother of Anna) 654–655

Æthelwold (brother of Anna) 655–664

Ealdwulf (nephew of Æthelwold) 664–713

Ælfwald (brother of Ealdwulf) 713–749

Hun 749–? (joint)

Beonna 749–c.758 (joint)

Alberht 749–? (joint)

Æthelred c.758–779

Æthelbert (St.) 779–794

Under Mercian Rule 794–796

East Anglian Rule

Eadwald 796

Under Mercian Rule 796–827

East Anglian Rule

Æthelstan 827–839

Æthelweard 839–855

Edmund (St.) 855–870

Sub-Kings under Norse Rule

Oswald 870–876

Æthelred 876–879

Norse Rule

Guthrum I (alias Æthelstan) 879–890

Eric (son of Guthrum) 890–902

Guthrum II 902–918

Under Rule of Wessex 918 from onwards.*The Kings of Essex***Kings of Essex**

Æscwine, 527–587

Sledda, 587–604

Sæberht, 604–616

Sæward, 616 (joint)

Sexbald, 616 (joint)

Sexred, 616–617

Sigeberht I, the Little, 617–653

Sigeberht II, the Blessed, 653–660

Swithhelm, 660–665

Sighere, 665–683 (joint)

Sæbbi, 665–695

Swæfred, 695–c.715 (joint)

Sigeheard, 695–c.715

Offa, 709 (joint)

Swæfberht, c.715–738

Sælred, 738–746

Swithred, 746–758

Sigeric I, 758–798

Sigered, 798–812

Dukes of Essex

Sigered, 812–825 (as above)

Sigeric II, c.833

Under Mercian and later Wessex control afterwards.*The Kings of Kent***Kentish Rule**

Hengest, c.455–488
Æsc, 488–512
Octa, 512–540
Eormenric, 540–560
Æthelberht I, 560–616
Eadbald, 616–640
Earconberht, 640–664
Ecgerht I, 664–673
Hlothre, 673–685
Eadric, 685–686
Mul, 686–687

Interregnum 687–688

Oswine, 688–690
Wihtræd, 690–725
Æthelberht II, 725–762
Eanmund, 762–764

Sub-Kings under Mercian Rule

Heahberht, 764–765
Ecgerht II, 765–772

Under Direct Mercian Rule, 772–776**Sub-Kings under Mercian Rule**

Ecgerht II, 776–785 (again)
Ealhmund, 784–785 (joint)
Ecgerht II (again), 784–785

Under Direct Mercian Rule, 785–796**Kentish Rule**

Eadberht Præn, 796–798

Mercian Sub-King

Cuthred, 798–807

Under Direct Mercian Rule, 807–823**Mercian Sub-King**

Baldred, 823–824

Wessex Sub-Kings

Æthelwulf, 824–839

Æthelstan, 839–851

Æthelberht, 851–860

Kent merged with the Kingdom of Wessex in 860.*The Kings of Mercia***Mercian Rule**

Creoda (son of Icel), c.585–593

Pybba (son of Creoda), 593–606 Ceorl (kinsman of Creoda), 606–626

Penda (son of Pybba), 626–655

Northumbrian Rule, 655–658 with Mercian sub-king of Middle Anglia

Peada (son of Penda), 655–656

Mercian Rule

Wulfhere (son of Penda), 658–675

Æthelred I (brother of Wulfhere), 675–704

Coenred (son of Wulfhere), 704–709

Coelred (son of Æthelred), 709–716

Coelwald (son of Æthelred), 716

Æthelbald (son of Alwih), 716–757

Beornred (line of Coenwalh), 757

Offa (son of Thingfrith, son of Eanulf), 757–796

Ecgrith (son of Offa), 796

Coenwulf (line of Coenwalh), 796–821

Cenelm (St.) (son of Coenwulf), 821

Ceolwulf I (line of Coenwalh), 821–823

Beornwulf (line of Beornred), 823–825
 Ludecan, 825–827
 Wiglaf, 827–828 (father-in-law of Coelwulf I's daughter)

Under Wessex Rule, 828–830

Mercian Rule

Wiglaf (again), 830–840
 Wigstan (St.) (grandson of Wiglaf), 840
 Beorhtwulf (line of Beornwulf), 840–852
 Burgred, 852–874

Sub-Kings under Norse Rule

Ceolwulf II (line of Ceolwulf I), 874–879

Mercian Rule

Æthelred II, 879–884

Lord/Ladies of the Mercians under Wessex Overlordship

Æthelred II, 884–911 (as above)
 Æthelflæd, c.888–918 (joint)
 Ælfwynn, 918–919

Mercia merged with the Kingdom of Wessex in 919.

The Kings of Northumbria

Comprising the former Kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira.

Kings of Bernicia

Esa, fl. 500
 Eoppa (son of Esa), fl. c.520
 Ida (son of Eoppa), 547–559
 Glappa (son of Ida), 559–560
 Adda (son of Ida), 560–568
 Æthelric (son of Ida), 568–572
 Theodric (son of Ida), 572–579
 Frithuwald (son of Ida), 579–585

Hussa (grandson of Ida), 585–593
 Æthelfrith (son of Æthelric), 593–616
 Edwin (St.) (of Deira), 616–633
 Eanfrith (son of Æthelfrith), 633–634
 Oswald (St.) (son of Æthelfrith), 634–642
 Oswiu (son of Æthelfrith), 642–670

Kings of Deira

Ælle (son of Yffi), 559–589
 Æthelric (brother of Ælle), 589–604
 Æthelfrith (of Bernicia, son of Æthelric), 604–616
 Edwin (St.) (son of Ælle), 616–633
 Osric (son of Ælfric), 633–634
 Oswald (St.) (of Bernicia), 634–642
 Oswiu (of Bernicia), 642–644
 Oswine (St.) (son of Osric), 644–651
 Æthelwald (son of Oswald), 651–656
 Alhfrith (son of Oswiu), 656–664
 Oswiu (of Bernicia), 664–670 (again)
 Ælfwine (son of Oswiu), 670–679

Kings of Northumbria

Oswiu, 664–670
 Ecgrith (son of Oswiu), 670–685
 Ældfrith (son of Oswiu), 685–704
 Eadwulf, 704–705
 Osred I (son of Ældfrith), 705–716
 Coenred (line of Ogg), 716–718
 Osric (son of Ealdfrith), 718–729
 Ceolwulf (St.) (brother of Coenred), 729–737
 Eadberht (cousin of Ceolwulf), 737–758
 Oswulf (son of Eadberht), 758–759
 Æthelwald Moll, 759–765
 Ealhred (son-in-law of Oswulf), 765–774
 Æthelred I (son of Æthelwald Moll), 774–779
 Ælfwald I (son of Oswulf), 779–789
 Osred II (son of Ealhred), 789–790

Æthelred I (again), 790–796
 Osbald, 796
 Eardwulf, 796–806
 Ælfwald II, 806–808
 Eardwulf (restored), 808–810
 Eanred (son of Eardwulf), 810–841
 Æthelred II (son of Eanred), 841–844
 Rædwulf (usurper), 844
 Æthelred II (again) 844–848
 Osbeorht 848–863
 Ælle II (usurper) 863–867

Sub-Kings under Norse York Rule

Ecgberht I, 867–872
 Ricsige, 872–876
 Ecgberht II, 876–878

Deira under Norse York Control from 878 – High-Reeves of Bamburgh

Eadulf, ?–913
 Ealdred I (son of Eadulf), 913–930
 Osulf (son of Ealdred), 930–963
 Waltheof (son of Osulf), 963–970
 Uhtred the Bold (son of Waltheof), 995–1016
 Eadulf I (son of Waltheof), 1016–1019
 Ealdred II (son of Uhtred), 1019–1038
 Eadulf II, 1038–1041 (son of Uhtred)

The Kings of Sussex

Ælla 477–514
 Cissa 514–?
 Æthelwath ?–685
 Berhtun 685–686 (joint)
 Andhun 685–?

Wessex Rule

Cædwalla 686–688

Sussex Rule

Wattus ?–692
 Nothelm 692–c.714
 Athelstan c.714–c.720
 Nunna c.720–725 (possibly the same as Nothelm)
 Æthelberht 725–c.750
 Osmund 758–772

Dukes in Sussex

Ealdwulf 765–c.791 (joint)
 Elfwald c.772
 Oswald c.772
 Oslac c.772

*The Kings of Wessex***Wessex Rule**

Cerdic, 519–534
 Cynric (son of Cerdic), 534–560
 Ceawlin (son of Cynric), 560–591
 Ceol (son of Cutha), 591–597
 Ceolwulf (son of Cutha), 597–611
 Cynegils (son of Ceol), 611–643
 Cenwealh (son of Cynegils), 643–645

Under Mercian Rule, 645–648**Wessex Rule**

Cenwealh (again), 648–672
 Seaxburh (Queen of Cenwalh), 672–674
 Cenfus (line of Ceolwulf), 674
 Æscwine (son of Cenfus), 674–676
 Centwine (son of Cynegils), 676–685
 Cædwalla (line of Ceawlin), 685–688
 Ine (line of Ceawlin), 688–726
 Æthelheard (brother-in-law of Ine), 726–740
 Cuthred (kinsman of Æthelheard), 740–756
 Sigberht, 756–757

Cynewulf, 757–786
 Beorhtric, 786–802
 Egbert, 802–839
 Æthelwulf, 839–858
 Æthelbald, 858–860
 Æthelberht, 860–865
 Æthelred I, 865–871
 Alfred, the Great, 871–899
 Edward the Elder, 899–924

Kings of Anglo-Saxon England

Athelstan, 924–940
 Edmund, 940–946
 Eadred, 946–955
 Eadwig, 955–959
 Edgar, King of Mercia from 957–959, King of all England from 959–975
 Edward the Martyr, 975–978
 Æthelred Unræd, 978–1016
 Edmund Ironside, 1016
 Cnut, 1016–1035

Kings and corresponding Sawyer number

Rulers of English peoples in the seventh and eighth centuries

Kings of Kent (S 1–41)
 Kings of the South Saxons (S 42–50)
 Rulers of the Hwicce (S 51–63)
 Kings of the East Saxons (S 64–5)
 Kings of the Northumbrians (S 66)

Rulers of the Mercians

Wulfhere, Æthelred, Coenred, Ceolred (S 67–81)
 King Æthelbald (S 82–103)
 King Offa (S 104–47)
 King Ecgrith (S 148–51)
 King Coenwulf (S 152–85)
 Ceolwulf and Wiglaf (S 186–90)
 King Berhtwulf (S 191–205)
 King Burgred (S 206–14)
 King Ceolwulf II (S 215–16)
 Æthelred and Æthelflæd (S 217–25)
 Edward (S 226)

Kings of the West Saxons

From Ine to Beorhtric (S 238–69)

King Ecgberht (S 270–84)

King Æthelwulf (S 285–325)

Æthelbald, Æthelberht, and Æthelred I (S 326–42)

King Alfred the Great (S 342a–57)

The tenth century (899–975)

King Edward the Elder (S 358–85)

King Æthelstan (S 386–458)

King Edmund (S 459–515)

King Eadred (S 516–80)

King Eadwig (S 581–66)

King Edgar (S 667–827)

King Edward the Martyr (S 828–32)

The late tenth and the eleventh centuries (978–1016)

King Æthelred the Unready (S 832a–946)

King Edmund Ironside (S 947–8)

Appendix 2: Anglo-Saxon Archbishops

Archdiocese of Canterbury

- 1 Augustine, 597 – (604 x 609)
- 2 Laurence, (604 x 609)–619
- 3 Mellitus, 619–624
- 4 Justus, 624–(627 x 631)
- 5 Honorius, (627 x 631)–653
- 6 Deusdedit, 655–664
- 7 Wigheard, (666/667)–668
- 8 Theodore, 669–690
- 9 Berhtwald, 693–731
- 10 Tatwine (Mercian), 731–734
- 11 Nothhelm, 735–739
- 12 Cuthbert, 740–760
- 13 Bregowine, 761–764
- 14 Jænberht, 765–792
- 15 Æthelheard, 793–805
- 16 Wulfred, 805–832
- 17 ?Feologild, 832–832
- 18 Ceolnoth, 833–870
- 19 Æthelred, 870–888
- 20 Plegmund, 890–923
- 21 Æthelhelm (Athelm), 923–926
- 22 Wulfhelm, c.926–(941/942)
- 23 Oda, 941–958
- 24 Ælfsige, 958–959
- 25 Byrthelm, 959–(959 x 973)
- 26 Dunstan, ?960–988
- 27 Æthelgar, 988–990
- 28 Sigeric, 990–994
- 29 Ælfric, 995–1005
- 30 Ælfheah (Godwine), ?1006–1012
- 31 Lyfing (Ælfstan), 1013–1020
- 32 Æthelnoth, 1020–1038
- 33 Eadsige, 1038–1050
- 34 Robert of Jumièges, 1051–1052
- 35 Stigand, 1052–dep. 1070

Archdiocese of York (from 735)

- 1 Egbert, 735–766
- 2 Æthelberht, (766/767)–(779/780); aka Coena or Ælberht
- 3 Eanbald I, (779/778)–796

- 4 Eanbald II, 796–808 (?)
- 5 Wulfsige, (808 x ?)–(830 x 837)
- 6 Wigmund, 837–854
- 7 Wulfhere, 854–900
- 8 Æthelbald, 900–(904 x 928)
- 9 Hrothweard, (904 x 928)–931
- 10 Wulfstan I, 931–956
- 11 Oscytel, 956–971
- 12 Edwald, 971; aka Æthelwold
- 13 Oswald (St.), 971–992
- 14 Ealdwulf, 995–1002
- 15 Wulfstan II, 1002–1023
- 16 Ælfric Puttoc, 1023–1051
- 17 Cynesige, 1051–1060
- 18 Ealdred, 1061–1069

Archdiocese of Lichfield

- 1 Hygeberht, 779–(depr. 799 x 801); (d. 803 x ?)

Appendix 3: Charter Elements

Typically, there are around 20 discernible textual elements contained in an Anglo-Saxon charter,¹ as demonstrated in a sample charter from King Athelstan (S 396²):

Rubric: Carta regis Adelstani de Chelegraue. (1)

In nomine Domini nostri Iesu Christi (2). Cuncta que humanis optutibus caducarum molimina rerum liquide uidentur decidunt; que uero abdita inuisaque sunt eterni arbitris moderamine perpetualiter constare. Haut dubium est his que illa adipisci, largiflua Dei largiente gratia, atque mercari posse merentibus diuina scripturarum documenta pollicentur (3). Quapropter ego Æthelstanus Angulsaxonum rex non modica infulatus, sublimatus, dignitate superno instigatus desiderio, fideli meo Ealdredo ministro terram que nuncupatur Cealhgræfan et Teobban wyrþe .v. manentium quam propria condignaue pecunia, id est .x. libras inter aurum et argentum, a paganis emerat, iubente Eadwardo rege necnon et duce Æþeredo, cum ceteris comitibus atque ministris (4), in iure hereditario libertatem concedens donabo, habendam possidendamque quamdiu uixerit et post obitum suum quibuscumque sibi placitis heredibus dare uoluerit (5). Hii sunt termini huius prefate terre (6).

Ðær se dic sceot in Wæclinga stræte, anlanges Wæxlinga stræte ðæt on ðane ford, þæt anlang broces in þanne oðerne ford, þonne of ðæm forde up on þane welle, 7 þanan in ðæt dell, þanan of ðæm delle in ðone dic, of ðæm dice in ðone oþerne dic, þone of ðæm dice in þone borc, þonne of þam broce to Cynburge wellan, þanne anlang dices to east coten, þæt þanan in þane ealdan broc, up of þam ealdan broce on æfem ðæt riþig, þæt up rihte in ðiod weg, æftær ðiod wege in þone dic, æfter dice in Wæxlingga strate (7).

Sit autem hec prefata terre donatio ab omni seculari honore libera, preter expeditionem et arcis pontisue construccionem, pro competenti pecunia quam ego accepi, id est .cl. mansas de puro auro (8). Si quis uero hanc largitionis munificentiam, arrepto procacitatis stimulo, infringere uel mutare aut minuere temptauerit, sciat se in illa magni examinis die cum poli cardines terreque fundamenta simul et infernorum ima pauitando contremescent latibula, qua uniuscuique patebit opus et conscientiam siue bonum siue malum quod gesserit, si non prius satisfaccione emendauerit (9 + 10). Anni ab incarnatione Domini nostri Iesu Christi .dcccxxvi., indiccione .xiiii (11). Þis sind þa land þe Æþelstan cyng gebocade Ealdrede wið his clæne feo (12) on ðas gewitnesse þe her on sind (13).

+ Ego Æþelstanus rex fundamine sancte crucis subarraui.

+ Ego Wulfhelm archiepiscopus subscripsi.

+ Ego Wensige episcopus consensi et subscripsi.

[and another 7 episcopi, 3 duces, 1 royal *discifer* and 8 ministri] (14)

The separate elements are:

(1) rubric: states the grantor and the land granted but not always included;

- (2) verbal invocation: a formula invoking divine support for the grant, and which appears in various forms;
- (3) proem: an introductory paragraph on a religious theme, e.g., the joys of heaven, charity and the transitoriness or nothingness of earthly things – this does not necessarily relate to the rest of the document;³
- (4) dispositive section: the actual grant made in direct speech, containing the king's name and title, the recipient(s) of the grant and the price paid (if any); it may also contain a short history of the estate;
- (5) statement of powers: the rights the beneficiary has over that grant;
- (6) boundary introduction clause: in Latin, but in later charters also in Old English;
- (7) bounds: at first brief and in Latin, in later charters then in Old English and very detailed;
- (8) exemption clause: this exempts the recipient from all burdens, except for the common three of fortress and bridge-work and military service;
- (9) sanction: a warning not to infringe or temper with the donation;
- (10) anathema: often in combination with the sanction, the anathema is a curse upon anyone disrespecting the sanction;
- (11) date: generally included and may contain the year of Incarnation, the Indiction, the Epact and/or regnal year;⁴
- (12) confirmation clause: re-statement that the king has made this grant;
- (13) subscription clause: stating that this grant has been witnessed by the following people;
- (14) witness list: in early charters the list is rather short but getting longer later on – there does not seem to be a minimum or maximum amount of possible witnesses; usually there is a certain order: king – archbishop – bishops – other clergy (priests, abbots) – nobles – royal ministers; among them members of the royal family (wife, sons, daughters, brothers, mothers) can be found but there does not seem to be rule as to their position within the list.

In addition, most charters contain a *pictorial invocation* at the beginning, either a simple cross a chrismon and/or ΑΩ. After the proem, some charters include a *movent clause*, that is the reason why the grant was made, usually after the royal title. This varies greatly along the form of 'ego . . . pro remedio animae meae', 'pro amore domini nostri' or 'pro aeterna redemptione animae meae'. Instead of a *movent clause* or succeeding it, words like 'quapropter', 'quamobrem' or 'igitur' connect the preceding paragraph(s) with the *dispositive section* (4). Within the *dispositive section* (4), a clause on the *appurtenances* may be included which details precisely the content of the grant, either all-inclusive and non-specific or a long list of features. The *place of issue* may also be stated, usually following the *dating clause* (11). In some instances, the *witness list* (14) is concluded with a *blessing*. Another element is the *endorsement* which, like the *rubric* (1), precedes the actual charter text. The *endorsement* states the land concerned, often in the forms of 'Carta de Columstoke' (Culmstock, S 386) or 'Munecatunes boc' (Monkton, S 387), and it may also state the royal grantor and the hidage of the grant.

Of course, only rarely does a charter contain all these elements, and a comparison of the extant corpus shows how fond Anglo-Saxon scribes were of variation. Similarly, while these elements convey a certain standard of diploma writing, their order and extent

betray a greater variety and non-standard as one would assume. As already discussed above, the Anglo-Saxon royal diploma was essentially an ecclesiastical document and as such they contain many elements that refer to their religious origins, especially the invocation(s), proem, sanction and anathema.

Notes

- ¹ The number of elements depends on which author one follows and in how far one decides to categorise the various elements. My enumeration follows Susan D. Thompson, *Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas – a Palaeography* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 27f and John M. Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici*. 6 Vols. (London: Sumptibus Societatis, 1839–1848), Vol. I, pp. ixff.
- ² AD 926. King Athelstan to Ealdred, *minister*; confirmation of 5 hides (*manentes*) at Chalgrave and Tebworth, Beds., formerly purchased from the Danes for 10 pounds of gold and silver (Latin with English bounds). (trsl. EHD I no. 103).
- ³ See Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus I*, pp. xff for some examples of the variety of the proem.
- ⁴ Indiction: a 15-year cycle used as a chronological unit; Epact: the period of time necessary to bring the solar calendar into harmony with the lunar calendar.

TABLES

Table 1. Royal Styles

Intitulatio	used by	Sawyer number & year
curagulus		
rex et curagulus	Athelstan	S 440 (938); S 447 (939); S 449 (939)
gubernator et curagulus	Æthelred	S 904 (1002)
primic(h)erius		
primic(h)erius	Edgar	S 748 (967)
rex et primic(h)erius	Alfred of Wessex	S 342a (835 for 871 x 899)
	Athelstan	S 408 (931); S 410 (931)
	Edmund	S 505 (945); S 509 (946)
	Eadred	S 555 (951); S 560–562 (all 953); S 563–565 (all 955); S 568 (955); S 570 (956 for ? 953 x 955); S 571 (956); S 574 (957)
	Eadwig	S 605 (955 or 956); S 618 (956); S 661 (961 for 956)
	Edgar	S 670 (951 for ?959); S 676 (958); S 676a (958); S 678 (958); S 682 (960); S 694 (961); S 708 (963); S 726 (964); S 732–S 735 (all 965); S 743 (966); S 750 (967); S 753 (967); S 772 (969); S 773 (969); S 785 (972); S 790 (973); S 791 (973); S 794a (974); S 802 (975); S 803 (975); S 829 (965 for 975x978)
	Æthelred	S 921 (1009)
rex, monarchus et primic(h)erius	Eadred	S 546 (949)
princeps		
rex et princeps	Eadberht II of Kent	S 28 (762 or 763)
rector		
rex et rector	Athelstan	S 420 (933); S 427 (934)
	Edmund	S 420 (933); S 427 (934)
	Eadred	S 520 (946)
	Æthelred	S 911 (1005)
rector et archo(n)s	Æthelred	S 923 (1011)
rector et imperator	Coenwulf of Mercia	S 153 (798)

regulus		
regulus	Eanberht of the Hwicce	S 55 (757)
	Uhtred of the Hwicce	S 58 (767); S 59 (770); S 60 (770)
subregulus	Æthelweard of the Hwicce	S 54 (706)
	Uhtred of the Hwicce	S 61 (764 x 774)
	Ealdred of the Hwicce	S 62 (777 x 780)
subregulus et patricius	Æthelred of Mercia (in a charter by Alfred of Wessex)	S 346 (889)
gubernator		
gubernator	Offa of Mercia	S 80 (709)
gubernator et rector	Alfred of Wessex	S 343a (872); S 353 (871 x 899)
	Eadred	S 567 (955)
	Eadwig	S 596 (956); S 622 (956)
	Edgar	S 680 & S 681 (both 959); S 685 (960); S 687 (960); S 688 (961); S 690 (961); S 698 (961); S 703 (962); S 811 (959 x 963)
	Æthelred	S 882 (995 for 994)
rex et gubernator	Athelstan	S 411 (935 x 938; ?937); S 437 (937)
	Edmund	S 498 (944)
	Eadwig	S 626 (956)
	Æthelred	S 863 (987); S 877 (996)
rex, gubernator et rector	Athelstan	S 450 (943 for 924 x 939)
	Edmund	S 493 (944); S 494 (944); S 497 (944); S 500 (944); S 501 (944); S 504 (944); S 506 (945); S 507 (945); S 510 (946); S 513 (944 x 946)
	Eadred	S 517a (946); S 517b (946); S 518 (946); S 519 (946); S 521 (947); S 522a (947); S 523–S 528 (all 947); S 530 (947); S 531 (948); S 533–S 535 (all 948); S 541 (948); S 542 (948 ? for 947); S 543 (949); S 547 (948); S 554 (951); S 577 (958); S 579 (951 x 955 or 955 x 957); S 580 (946 x 955)
	Eadwig	S 955–957 (all 958); S 587 (956); S 588 (956); S 595 (956); S 602–604 (all 956); S 611 (956); S 612 (956); S 619 (956); S 620 (956); S 628 (956); S 640 & 641 (both 957); S 643 (957); S 651 (958); S 653 (958); S 662 & 662a (955 x 959); S 663 (956)

	Edgar	S 668 (922 for ? 972); S 693 (961); S 674 (958); S 679 (958); S 704 (962); S 715 (963); S 724 (963); S 730 (964); S 768 (968); S 769 (968); S 770 (969)
	Edward the Martyr	S 828 (956 for 975 x 978)
	Æthelred	S 852 (984); S 872 (988); S 879 (996); S 900 (1002); S 931a (1013); S 940 (1006x1011)
basileus		
basileus	Alfred of Wessex	S 351 (939)
	Athelstan	S 409 (931); S 414 (931); S 415 (931); S 441 (938); S 442 (938)
	Edmund	S 459–S 463 (all 940); S 470 (940); S 480 (942); S 508 (946); S 511 (960 ? for 941)
	Eadwig	S 658 (959); S 598 (956); 600 (956); S 601 (956); S 616 & 617 (both 956); S 624 (956); S 632 (956); S 635 (956)
	Edgar	S 673 (958 for 959); S 689 (961); S 695 (961); S 699 (961); S 700–S 702 (all 962); S 706 (962); S 709–S 711 (all 963); S 714 (963); S 716–S 719 (all 963); S 722 (963); S 729 (964); S 744 (966); S 747 (967); S 749 (967 for 972); S 754 (967); S 755 (967); S 756 (958 or 968); S 757–S 760 (all 968); S 762 (968); S 764 (968); S 765 (968); S 767 (968); S 771 (969); S 776 (970); S 779 (970); S 780 (970); S 786 (972); S 788 (972); S 789 (972); S 792 (973); S 794 (974); S 796 (974); S 799 (974); S 800 (975); S 801 (975 ? for 974); S 805 (978 for c.972); S 806 (978 for ? 968); S 807 (984 for 963 x 970); S 812 (967x975); S 814 (963x975); S 815 (963x975); S 817 (963x975); S 818 (963x975); S 820 (973x974); S 821 (963x975); S 824 (963x975); S 825 (963x975)
	Æthelred	S 835 (979); S 836 (980); S 838 (981); S 839 (982); S 840–842 (all 982); S 843–946 (all 983); S 848 (983); S 849 (983); S 851 (983); S 855 (984); 858 (985); S 859 (985); S 861 (986); S 864 (987); S 865 (987); S 868 (988); S 869 (988); S 873 (988); S 876 (993); S 880 (994); S 884 (995); S 888 (996); S 889 (996); S 892–895 (all 998); S 896 (999); S 902 (1002); S 907 (1004); S 916 (1007); S 918 (1008); S 927 (1012 or 1013); S 932 (1014)
basileus et imperator	Athelstan	S 406 (930)
basileus, fylos et curanculus	Athelstan	S 429 (935)
basileus et curagulus	Athelstan	S 430 (935); S 438 (937); S 446 (939)
Athelstan	Athelstan	S 431 (936); S 448 (939)
basileus et rex	Edmund	S 485 (942)

basileus, gubernator et rector	Eadred	S 517 (945); S 532 (948); S 536 (948); S 540 (948)
	Eadwigr	S 613 (956); S 649 (957)
	Edgar	S 691 (961); S 727 (964); S 793 (973)
	Æthelred	S 834 (979)
basileus et monarchus	Eadwig	S 664 (955 x 959)
basileus et primic(h)erius	Edgar	S 728 (964)
	Æthelred	S 905 (1003 for 1002)
basileus, rex et imperator	Edgar	S 751 (967)
imperator		
imperator	Edgar	S 775 (970)
	Æthelred	S 874 (995); S 886 (995); S 903 (1002)
rex et imperator	Eadred	S 552a (950)
rex, imperator, gubernator et propugnator	Athelstan	S 392 (850 for 939 or 940)
	Eadred	S 549 (949); S 569 (955); S 572 (956 for 954 x 955)
	Eadwig	S 633 (956)
rex, rector, imperator et propugnator	Eadred	S 548 (949); S 550 (949)
rex, imperator, gubernator, propugnator et rector	Æthelred	S 931 (1013)
other		
previsor	Athelstan	S 395 (924)
	Edward (Martyr)	S 831 (977)
praelatus	Æthelwulf of Wessex	S 287 (839); S 320 (880? for 855)
monarchus	Offa of Mercia	S 119 (781)
	Eadwig	S 583 (956)
	Edgar	S 736 (965)
	Æthelred	S 914 (1006 for 1002); S 925 (1012)
rex et monarchus	Athelstan	S 433 (670? for 937, or 937)
	Eadred	S 576 (958)
	Eadwig	S 591 (956)
	Æthelred	S 853 (984); S 866 (987); S 933 (1014)
apex	Athelstan	S 421 (933); S 423 (933)
	Edgar	S 692 (961); S 740 (966)
primus	Eadwig	S 609 (956)

archons	Eadwig	S 615 (956); S 636 (956); S 638 (956)
	Edgar	S 763 (968)
anax	Edgar	S 712a (963)
rex et predux	Edgar	S 725 (965)
Old English styles		
cyning and brytenwealda	Athelstan	S 427 (934)
casere	Eadred	S 566 (955)
wealdend	Æthelred	S 914 (1006 for 1002)
cyning	Æthelred of Mercia	S 74 (682)
	Æthelbald of Mercia	S 98 (?743 x 745)
	Offa of Mercia	S 126 (779 x 790); S 136a (793)
	Berhtwulf of Mercia	S 204 (844 x 845)
	Æthelwulf of Wessex	S 313 (854); S 325 (854)
	Æthelberht of Wessex	S 333 (864)
	Æthelred of Wessex	S 342 (?869 or 870)
	Alfred of Wessex	S 357 (871 x 899)
	Edward (Elder) of Wessex	S 385 (909)
	Athelstan	S 391 (843 for 943)
	Edgar	S 813 (970 x 975)
	Æthelred	S 939 (995 x 999)

Table 2. Frequency of Legitimation Formulas

King	Kingdom	Regnal Date	Sawyer numbers of charters	Charters in total (excl. post-Conquest forgeries)	Containing a legitimation formula
Æthelberht	Kent	560–616	1–5	4	1
Eadbald	Kent	616–640	6	1	
Hlothhere	Kent	673–685	7–8	2	
Eadric	Kent	685–686	9	1	
Swæfheard	Kent	fl. 690	10–11	2	
Oswine	Kent	688–690	12–14	3	
Wihtred	Kent	690–725	15–22	8	
Æthelberht II	Kent	725–762	23–25	3	
Eadberht I	Kent	725–748	26–27	2	
Eadberht II	Kent	fl. 762–c.764	28–29	2	1
Eardwulf	Kent	? 747–767	30–31	2	
Sigered	Kent	? 762–765	32–33	2	
Egbert	Kent	765–772; 776–785	34–37	4	
Ealhmund	Kent	784–785	38	1	
Cuthred	Kent	798–807	39–41	3	
Nunna/Nothhelm	Sussex	692–725	42–45	4	
Æthelberht	Sussex	725–750	46–47	2	
Osmund	Sussex	758–772	48–49	2	
Ealdwulf	Sussex	765–791	50	1	
Osric	Hwicce	675–685	51	1	
Oshere	Hwicce	679–693	52–53	2	1
Æthelweard	Hwicce	fl. 693	54	1	
Eanberht, Uhtred and Ealdred	Hwicce	757–759	55–56	2	1
Uhtred	Hwicce	759–775	57–61	5	5
Ealdred	Hwicce	759–778	62–63	2	
Offa	Essex (recte)	fl. 709	64	1	
Swæfred	Essex	695–715	65–65b	3	
Ecgrith	Northumbria	670–685	66	1	
Wulfhere	Mercia	658–675	67–69	2	
Æthelred	Mercia	675–704	70–77	7	4
Cenred	Mercia	704–709	78–80	3	1
(Offa)	(East Anglia)		(80)	(1)	(1)
Ceolred	Mercia	709–716	81	1	

Æthelbald	Mercia	716–757	–	24	12
Æthelbald	Mercia	757–796	104–147	43	19
Ecgfrith	Mercia	796	148–151	4	3
Coenwulf	Mercia	796–821	152–185	31	14
Ceolwulf	Mercia	821–823	186–187	2	
Wiglaf	Mercia	827–828	188–190	2	1
Berhtwulf	Mercia	840–852	191–205	14	7
Burgred	Mercia	852–874	206–214	8	5
Ceolwulf II Mercia	Mercia	874–879	215–216	2	2
Edward (the Elder?)	Mercia	899–924	226	1	
Cenwalh	Wessex	643–645; 648–672	227–229	3	2
Cædwalla	Wessex	685–688	230–235	6	6
Baldred	Wessex	681	236	1	
Centwine	Wessex	676–685	237	1	
Ine	Wessex	688–726	238–252	15	7
Æthelheard	Wessex	726–740	253–255	3	
Cuthred	Wessex	740–756	256–259	4	
Cynewulf	Wessex	757–786	260–265	6	
Æthelberht	Wessex & Kent	781	266	1	
Beorhtric	Wessex	786–802	267–269	3	1
Egbert	Wessex	802–839	270–284	16	7
Æthelwulf	Wessex	839–858	285–325	42	23
Æthelbald	Wessex	858–860	326	1	1
Æthelberht	Wessex	860–865	327–333	7	2
Æthelred	Wessex	865–871	334–342	10	6
Æthelred	Wessex	871–899	342a–357	16	9
Edward the Elder	Wessex/ASE	900–924	358–385	28	19
Athelstan	ASE	924–939	386–458	67	48
Edmund	ASE	939–946	459–515	56	21
Eadred	ASE	946–955	516–580	65	25
Eadwig	ASE	955–959	581–666	86	32
Edgar	ASE	959–975	667–827	154	68
Edward the Martyr	ASE	975–978	828–832	5	3
Æthelred	ASE	978–1016	833–944	112	62
Total				919 (920)	419 (420)

Table 3. Variants of Legitimation Formulas

Latin	Kings	Charters
Deo adjuvante – <i>God-helping</i>	Æthelred of Mercia (1)	S 70
	Ine of Wessex (1)	S 244
Omnitnantis dexteram – <i>By the right hand of the all-sustaining one</i>	Athelstan (2)	S 417 & 422
Dei providential – <i>By the providence of God</i>	Æthelred (2)	S 886 & 891
Divino fultus/fulciente – <i>By divine help/support</i>	Offa of Mercia (1)	S 117
	Berhtwulf of Mercia (1)	S 197
	Edward the Elder (1)	S 364
	Eadwig (1)	S 582
Dei dignitate – <i>By the dignity/ authority/ majesty of God</i>	Ine of Wessex (1)	S 250
	Edgar (1)	S 713
	Æthelred (2)	S 887 & 934
Dei largiflua – <i>By the liberal God</i>	Ecgbert of Wessex (1)	S 283
	Eadwig (3)	S 597, 629 & 644
Dei prædestinante – <i>By the pre-destination of God</i>	Eanberht, Aldred, Uhtred of the Hwicce (2)	S 55 & 57
	Offa of Mercia (3)	S 109, 127 & 145
Rex regum – <i>(by the) King of kings</i>	Offa of Mercia (1)	S 139
	Athelstan (1)	S 406
	Eadred (2)	S 544 & 552a
	Edgar (1)	S 751
Dei misericordia – <i>By the mercy of God</i>	Æthelwulf of Wessex (1)	S 319
	Alfred of Wessex (1)	S 343
	Edward the Elder (1)	S 369
	Æthelred (2)	S 880 & 911
Dei dispositione – <i>By the arrangement of God</i>	Eadwig (1)	S 592
	Edgar (3)	S 739, 799 & 810
	Æthelred (1)	S 910

Divino gubernante – <i>By divine direction/ governance</i>	Offa of Mercia (1)	S 106
	Berhtwulf of Mercia (1)	S 196
	Cædwalla of Wessex (1)	S 233
	Athelstan (1)	S 402
	Æthelred (2)	S 894 & 895
Dei nutu – <i>By the help of God</i>	Eadmund (1)	S 459
	Eadwig (1)	S 633
	Edgar (2)	S 697 & 721
	Æthelred (2)	S 918 & 927
Dei opitulante – <i>By the help/ assistance of God</i>	Eadwig (1)	S 618
	Edgar (1)	S 817
	Æthelred (4)	S 841, 937, 942 & 944
Deo regnante – <i>By the ruling God</i>	Cenwall of Wessex (1)	S 228
	Cædwalla of Wessex (2)	S 231 & 234
	Ine of Wessex (4)	S 243, 245, 247 & 248
	Athelstan (1)	S 455
Dei dono/donifluo – <i>By the gift/ gift-flow of God</i>	Uhtred of the Hwicce (1)	S 61
	Coenred of Mercia (1)	S 80
	Offa of Mercia (3)	S 113, 120 & 121
	Coenwulf of Mercia (1)	S 161
	Athelstan (2)	S 399 & 400
	Æthelred (1)	S 847
Omnipotentis dexteram – <i>By the right hand of the omnipotent One</i>	Athelstan (7)	S 407, 418a, 419, 426, 434–436
	Eadmund (1)	S 511
	Æthelred (1)	S 931b
Dei ammiculante – <i>By the support/assistance of God</i>	Eadwig (1)	S 658
	Edgar (6)	S 673, 728, 756, 786, 788 & 812
	Æthelred (2)	S 876 & 892

<i>Dei concedente – By the concession of God</i>	Offa of Mercia (5)	S 112, 116, 118, 141, 147
	Cenwulf of Mercia (1)	S 171
	Burgred of Mercia (4)	S 206, 208–210
	Alfred of Wessex (1)	S 348
	Æthelred (1)	S 853
<i>Christo conferente – By the conferring/bestowing Christ</i>	Athelstan (2)	S 408 & 410
	Edgar (9)	S 682, 689, 695, 708, 732–734, 824 & 827
	Edward the Martyr (1)	S 829
<i>Divina adridente – Pleasing to the divine</i>	Cenwulf of Mercia (2)	S 167 & 182
	Æthelwulf of Wessex (2)	S 286 & 287
	Athelstan (3)	S 411, 447 & 449
	Eadmund (3)	S 466, 468 & 476
	Edgar (1)	S 784
	Æthelred (3)	S 890, 922 & 924
<i>Deo donante – God-given</i>	Uhtred of the Hwicce (3)	S 58–60
	Æthelred of Mercia (1)	S 77
	Æthelbald of Mercia (1)	S 89
	Ecgfrid of Mercia (1)	S 148
	Ecgberht of Wessex (1)	S 270a
	Æthelwulf of Wessex (2)	S 292 & 320
	Æthelred of Wessex (1)	S 334
	Athelstan (6)	S 429–431, 438, 446 & 448
<i>Divina indulgente – By divine indulgence</i>	Edward the Elder (10)	S 358, 373, 375–377, 380–384
	Athelstan (1)	S 395
	Eadred (4)	S 551, 552, 558 & 578
	Edgar (1)	S 816

<i>Dei dispensatione – By the dispensation of God</i>	Eadberht of Kent (1)	S 28
	Æthelbald of Mercia (7)	S 82, 84, 96, 99, 100–102
	Offa of Mercia (2)	S 105 & 119
	Beorhtwulf of Mercia (1)	S 194
	Cædwalla of Wessex (1)	S 235
	Beorhtric of Wessex (1)	S 268
	Athelstan (2)	S 401 & 428
	Eadwig (1)	S 617
	Æthelred (2)	S 846 & 848
<i>Deo disponente – Assigned by God</i>	Offa of Mercia (1)	S 114
	Berhtwulf of Mercia (2)	S 193 & 195
	Cædwalla of Wessex (2)	S 230 & 232
	Athelstan (1)	S 424
	Edmund (1)	S 490
	Eadred (2)	S 529 & 575
	Eadwig (4)	S 585, 610, 645 & 650
	Edgar (4)	S 672, 685, 712 & 778
	Æthelred (1)	S 845
<i>Omnipatrantis dexteram – By the right hand of the all-accomplishing One</i>	Edward the Elder (1)	S 379
	Athelstan (8)	S 412, 413, 416, 418, 421, 423, 425 & 458
	Edgar (5)	S 692, 740, 777, 781 & 822
	Æthelred (5)	S 856, 860, 870, 919 & 928
<i>Christo largiente – By the lavishly bestowing Christ</i>	Æthelred of Mercia (1)	S 76
	Æthelbald of Mercia (1)	S 94
	Coenwulf of Mercia (1)	S 172
	Berhtwulf of Mercia (2)	S 198 & 205
	Burgred of Mercia (1)	S 207
	Ceolwulf of Mercia (2)	S 215 & 216
	Æthelwulf of Wessex (3)	S 288, 290 & 320
	Edward the Elder (2)	S 360 & 366
	Athelstan (2)	S 420 & 427
	Eadwig (2)	S 594 & 648

<i>continued</i> Christo largiente –	Edgar (3)	S 782, 818 & 819
	Æthelred (1)	S 916
Divina allubescence/ collubescence – <i>By</i> divine love(liness)/ pleasure	Alfred of Wessex (1)	S 342a
	Eadred (2)	S 555 & 574
	Eadwig (2)	S 605 & 661
	Edgar (17)	S 670, 676, 676a, 678, 694, 726, 735, 743, 750, 772, 773, 775, 790, 791, 794a, 802 & 803
	Æthelred (1)	S 917
Christi annuente – <i>With</i> assent of Christ/pleasing to Christ	Æthelbald of Mercia (1)	S 83
	Cynewalh of Wessex (1)	S 229
	Ine of Wessex (1)	S 242
	Ecgberht of Wessex (2)	S 275 & 284
	Æthelwulf of Wessex (1)	S 309
	Edward the Elder (1)	S 362
	Edmund (2)	S 467 & 478
	Eadwig (3)	S 607, 612 & 626
	Edgar (4)	S 793, 811, 814 & 826
	Edward Martyr (2)	S 831 & 832
	Æthelred (8)	S 834, 839, 842, 861, 877, 881, 893, 921
Dei favente – <i>By the</i> favour of God	Æthelwulf of Wessex (3)	S 285, 312 & 317
	Alfred of Wessex (2)	S 351 & 353
	Athelstan (6)	S 414, 415, 440–442 & 445
	Edmund (10)	S 460–463, 469, 470, 480, 485, 508 & 509
	Eadred (9)	S 560–565, 568, 570 & 571
	Eadwig (2)	S 583 & 591
	Edgar (6)	S 667, 677, 699, 723, 795 & 825
	Æthelred (11)	S 836, 844, 855, 858, 862, 864, 868, 889, 902, 903 & 940

Dei gratia – <i>By the grace of God</i> (or any other invocation of Christ and/or the divine)	Æthelbald of Mercia (1)	S 87
	Offa of Mercia (1)	S 138
	Ecgfrid of Mercia (2)	S 150 & 151
	Coenwulf of Mercia (9)	S 155, 157, 159, 164, 165, 170, 175–177
	Wiglaf of Mercia (1)	S 188
	Ecgberht of Wessex (3)	S 271, 277 & 281
	Æthelwulf of Wessex (11)	S 293, 296, 297, 302–305, 307, 308, 318 & 323
	Æthelbald of Wessex (1)	S 326
	Æthelberht of Wessex (1)	S 329
	Æthelred of Wessex (4)	S 335, 338a, 340 & 341
	Alfred of Wessex (4)	S 345, 347, 350 & 354
	Edward the Elder (3)	S 359, 363 & 372
	Athelstan (2)	S 391 & 393
	Eadred (3)	S 537, 546 & 553
	Eadwig (5)	S 598, 614, 627, 630 & 639
	Edgar (2)	S 675 & 761
	Æthelred (7)	S 838, 854, 863, 866, 883, 914 & 933

Miscellaneous:

- S 5: Æðelbertus rex Deo inspirante (by the inspiring God)
- S 52: Oshere rex Catholicam regulam (Catholic ruler)
- S 80: Offa divina permissione Orientalium Anglorum gubernator (by divine permission)
- S 97: Æðelbaldus dum mihi rex æternus omnipotens Deus terrigeni regni absque merito portionem aliquam contulisset (rule conferred by eternal king, omnipotent God)
- S 144: Offa ipso piissimo præordinante Deo rex Merciorum (by the preordaining God)
- S 298: Ætheluulf Deo auxiliante occidentalium Saxonum rex (by the helping God)
- S 433: Æðelstanus rex monarchus totius Bryttanniæ insule flante Deo (by the breathing God)
- S 464: Eadmundus rex Anglorum cælestis patrie exardens (ardent heavenly/divine father)
- S 479: Eadmund beato dei patrocínio rex et rector Angulsæxna (blessed with God's patronage/advocacy)
- S 505: Edmund diuina Dei fulciento gratiuncula rex totiusque Albionis primicerius (divinely supporting God)

- S 522: Eadredus rex Anglorum cæterarumque persistentium circumquaque gentium Deo omnipotenti michi quæ teneo cuncta referenti (I hold ... by the omnipotent God)
- S 576: Eadred rex Merciorum diuina procurante gratia ritu parentele et pie et strenue exposcente Albionis monarchiam solus exercens (divine administration)
- S 590: Eaduig, imperiali Angol Saxonum diademate infulatus ac bonorum regum exempla secutus et populos mihi a Deo concessos regere pacifice optans (concession from God)
- S 622: Eaduig, altitonantis prouidentia non solum gubernator et rector Angligene prosapie immo aliarum nationum circumquaque morantium (by providence of the high-mover [?])
- S 636: Eadwig numine cælesti gentis Geuuisorum orientaliumque nec non occidentalium simul etiam aquilonalium Saxonum archons (in the name of/by the authority of the celestial one)
- S 637: Eadwig Deo propitio rex Anglorum (by the appeasing God)
- S 652: Edwi Rex Anglorum, sub manu Dei Regali dignitate largitus (under the hand of God)
- S 823: Eadgar Angligenarum ceterarumque gentium hinc inde persistentium rex a domino constitutus (constituted by the Lord)
- S 843: Aþelred, eius [i.e. God] gratuita miseratione et inolita benignitate tocius Albionis basileus natiue iureque dedicatus (by the voluntary sympathy/compassion of God)
- S 885: Aþelred totius Anglorum nationis summo rerum opifice largiente regni gubernacula sortitus (by the generosity of the creator of the highest things)
- S 888: Aðelredus, totius Albionis caeterarumque gentium in circuitu persistentium, munificente superno largitore basileus (munificence of the celestial donor)

Old English variants:

- S 74: ædelred myd fwltwne of ælmyhtey god cynyg of merchnrich
- S 333: Aþelbreht mid Godes gife Westsaxna kyning
- S 342: Atheldred mid Godes giue Westsaxne king mid leue and eþeafunghe mine ðare seleste Biotene
- S 391: Aþelstan God gyuing kyng welding eal Brytone
- S 427: Mid Godæs gifæ Ic AþELSTAN Ongolsaxna cyning 7 brytænwalda eallæs ðyses Iglanðes þurh Godæs sælene
- S 566: He [i.e., God] hafað geweorðað mid cynedome Angulseaxna Eadred cyning 7 casere totius Brittannię Deo gratias for ðem weolegað & arað gehadade & læwede þa ðe mid rihte magon geærnian.
- S 779: Gode ælmihtigum rixiende ðe ræt & gewissað eallum gesceaftum þurh his agenne wisdom & he ealra cininga cynedom gewylt ic Eadgar cining eac þurh his gife ofer Engla þeode nu up aræred. & he hæfð nu gewyld to minum anwealde Scottas & Cumbras & eac swylce Bryttas & eall þæt ðis igland him on innan hæfð þæt ic nu on sibbe gesitte minne cynestol hohful embe þæt hu ic his lof arære ðe læs ðe his lof alicge to swyðe nu on urum timan þurh ure asolcennysse.
- S 914: Aðelred mid Godes gyfe Angelðeode cyning, and wealdend eac oðra iglanda ðe her abutan licgað

Table 4. Historical Context

	Year	+ gratia Dei	- gratia Dei	Total	Context according to the ASC
A T H E L S T A N	924	1		1	accession of Athelstan
	925		1	1	
	926		2	2	marriage of Athelstan's sister to Sihtric, king of the Northumbrians
	927		1	1	Athelstan succeeds to the kingdom of the Northumbrians and brings other kings under his rule
	928	2		2	
	929	2		2	
	930	1	3	4	
	931	7	1	8	
	932	4		4	
	933	5		5	
	934	6		6	Athelstan ravages Scotland
	935	2		2	
	936	1		1	
	937	5	3	8	Battle of Brunanburh
	938	3	2	5	
	939	5		5	death of Athelstan; Edmund succeeds to the throne
E D M U N D	940	11	3	14	
	941	2	3	5	Northumbrians were false to their pledges and chose Olaf from Ireland as their king
	942	3	4	7	capture of the five boroughs
	943	1	7	8	fight between Olaf and Edmund with peace agreement afterwards; baptism of Olaf
	944		10	10	Edmund reduces all Northumbria under his rule and drives out Olaf and Ragnald, another king
	945	1	2	3	Edmund ravages Cumberland and gives it to Malcolm, king of Scotland, if he'd be his ally
	946	2	2	4	Edmund stabbed by Leofa
E A D R E D	946		5	5	Eadred succeeds to the kingdom, reduces Northumbria and Scots swear oaths to him
	947	2	9	11	Northumbrians swear oaths to Edmund, but shortly afterwards were false to them
	948	1	9	10	Edmund ravages Northumbria because they chose Eric as their king and reduces it under his rule
	949	4	4	8	
	950	2		2	
	951	2	3	5	

	Year	+ gratia Dei	- gratia Dei	Total	Context according to the ASC
	952			0	Eadred imprisons Archbishop Wulfstan and wreaks revenge on the borough of Thetford
	953	3		3	
	954			0	Northumbrians drive out Eric and Eadred succeeds to the kingdom
	955	4	3	7	Eadred dies
E A D W I G	955	1		1	Eadwig succeeds and exiles St Dunstan
	956	23	33	56	Abbot Dunstan was expelled across the sea
	957	4	7	11	Eadwig divorces his wife; Edgar succeeds to the kingdom of Mercia
	958	1	6	7	
	959		2	2	Eadwig dies
E D G A R	956	1		1	
	957			0	Edgar succeeds to the kingdom of Mercia
	958	6	2	8	
	959	1	2	3	Edgar succeeds to the whole kingdom; he calls back St Dunstan
	960	2	3	5	
	961	6	6	12	Dunstan elected archbishop
	962		8	8	great mortality; St Paul's burnt down and re-built
	963	5	13	18	St Æthelwold consecrated bishop of Winchester
	964	2	4	6	Edgar expels worldly clerics
	965	4	1	5	Edgar marries
	966	3	5	8	
	967	2	6	8	
	968	1	12	13	
	969	2	2	4	Edgar orders Thanet to be ravaged
	970	4	3	7	
	971	1		1	death of Archbishop Oscetel of York
	972	3	3	6	death of atheling Edmund
	973	3	1	4	Edgar consecrated king at Bath
	974	3	3	6	
	975	2	2	4	death of Edgar

Æ T H E L R E D	978			0	Edward martyred and Æthelred succeeds to the throne
	979	1	1	2	Æthelred consecrated king
	980	1	1	2	first Viking ravages
	981	1		1	Viking ravages
	982	3	1	4	Viking ravages
	983	6	2	8	
	984	3	2	5	
	985	3	2	5	<i>ealdorman</i> Ælfric driven out
	986	2		2	Æthelred ravages Rochester
	987	3	2	5	
	988	2	4	6	death of Dunstan
	989			0	
	990	2	2	4	
	991			0	Battle of Maldon
	992			0	death of Oswald; treachery within English army
	993	1		1	Viking ravages; treachery and subsequent flight of English army
	994	2	1	3	Swein and Olaf ravage ASE; tribute payment; Olaf baptised and allies himself to Æthelred
	995	3	1	4	
	996	4	2	6	
	997	2		2	Viking ravages
	998	4		4	Viking ravages; treachery and subsequent flight of English army
	999		1	1	Viking ravages; treachery and subsequent flight of English army
	1000		1	1	Ethelred ravages Cumberland; Vikings ally to Richard of Normandy
	1001		2	2	Viking ravages; treachery by Pallig; marriage to Emma (or 1002)
	1002	3	4	7	St Brice's day massacre; tribute payment
	1003			0	Viking ravages; treachery and subsequent flight of English army
	1004		3	3	another Viking attack but this time stout resistance by English under leader Ulfcetel
	1005	2	2	4	great famine
	1006			0	great Danish terror; tribute payment and truce agreement
	1007	2	1	3	payment of aforementioned tribute; Eadric appointed <i>ealdorman</i> of Mercia
	1008	2	1	3	building of ships
	1009	2		2	naval force ready but of no use; arrival of Thorkel's army; fight prevented by treacherous Eadric
	1010			0	ravages of Thorkel's army; English army useless

	1012	1	4	5	tribute paid; martyrdom of archbishop of Canterbury
	1013	1	2	3	Swein arrives and people of Northumbria et al. submit to him; Ethelred goes into exile
	1014	1	1	2	death of Swein; return of Æthelred; victorious fight against Cnut's army; tribute payment; flood
	1015	1		1	treachery by Eadric; insolence by atheling Edmund; Cnut returns
	1016		1	1	Cnut ravages; English army refuses to fight without the king being present so disperses; people submit to Cnut; death of Æthelred

Excluded: S 386–390, 392, 393, 411, 450, 455, 458, 471, 496, 511, 513, 514, 516, 517, 542, 559, 570–581, 586, 605, 662, 662a, 664, 665, 668, 670, 671, 756, 801, 805–827, 833, 927, 936–940, 943

Table 5. Consecration Vocabulary in Charters

Terminology	King	Sawyer number
consecratus – consecrated	Ceolwulf of Mercia, 821–823	S 186
	Athelstan, 924–939	S 394
	Eadred, 946–955	S 520
	Edgar, 959–975	S 797
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 909
ordinatus – ordained	Coenwulf of Mercia, 796–821	S 183
	Edmund, 939–946	S 478
	Eadred, 946–955	S 575
	Eadwig, 955–959	S 585, 610, 645, 650
	Edgar, 959–975	S 712, 778
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 877, 881
unguere, ungo – to anoint	Æthelwulf of Wessex, 839–858	S 308
	Edgar, 959–975	S 799
sors, sortis – election	Æthelbald of Mercia, 716–757	S 82
	Æthelred, dux et patricius of Mercia, 879–911	S 220
	Eadwig, 955–959	S 616
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 840, 885
suffragium, suffragii – vote	Æthelbald of Mercia, 716–757	S 90, 92, 96
	Berhtwulf of Mercia, 840–852	S 197
	Ine of Wessex, 688–726	S 241
	Edward the Elder, 900–924	S 364
	Eadred, 946–955	S 522, 567
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 847
electio, electionis – election, vote	Eadred, 946–955	S 520
electus – elected	Coenwulf of Mercia, 796–821	S 152
	Athelstan, 924–939	S 440

constitutus – appointed	Eadberht II of Kent, 762–764	S 28
	Eanberht, Uhtred and Ealdred of the Hwicce, 757–759	S 55
	Offa of Mercia, 757–796	S 105, 139
	Egbert of Wessex, 802–839	S 271, 274
	Edgar, 959–975	S 817
sortitus – appointed	Eadwig, 955–959	S 616
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 885
coronatus – crowned	Burgred of Mercia, 852–874	S214
subthronizatus - enthroned	Cenred of Mercia, 704–709	S 79
	Eadred, 946–955	S 546
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 838, 912, 917
solium, solii – throne	Edward the Elder, 900–924	S 377
	Athelstan, 924–939	S 407, 412, 413, 416–418, 418a, 419, 422, 425, 426, 434, 435, 458
	Edmund, 939–946	S 511
	Edgar, 959–975	S 683, 777, 781, 816, 822
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 838, 856, 860, 870, 919, 931b
infula, infulae – royal emblem	Æthelwulf of Wessex, 839–858	S 286
	Athelstan, 924–939	S 430
	Eadwig, 955–959	S 590
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 912, 917
galea, galeae – (royal) helmet	Eadred, 946–955	S 549

sceptrum, sceptri – sceptre, kingship	Æthelberht of Kent, 560–616	S 79
	Cenred of Mercia, 704–709	S 79
	Æthelbald of Mercia, 716–757	S 92
	Offa of Mercia, 757–796	S 109, 145, 129, 134, 141, 147
	Coenwulf of Mercia, 796–821	S 180, 181
	Ine of Wessex, 688–726	S 241
	Æthelred of Wessex, 865–871	S 337
	Edward the Elder, 900–924	S 376
	Athelstan, 924–939	S 401, 402, 404
	Eadred, 946–955	S 520, 526, 544, 552a, 557, 572, 576
	Eadwig, 955–959	S 583, 598, 617, 633
	Edgar, 959–975	S 779, 799
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 856, 869, 881, 894, 912, 922, 933
corona – crown	Alfred of Wessex, 871–899	S 357
	Edward the Elder, 900–924	S 370
	Athelstan, 924–939	S 440
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 912
nomine regis fungens – exacting the name of king	Eanberht, Uhtred and Ealdred of the Hwicce, 757–759	S 55
	Cuthred of Wessex, 740–756	S 256
potitus – put under the power of	Æthelberht of Kent, 560–616	S 4
	Eadwig, 955–959	S 607, 626
	Edgar, 959–975	S 709, 717, 720, 722, 826
	Æthelred, 978–1016	S 894
conferre, confero – to confer	Æthelbald of Mercia, 716–757	S 97
	Edward (the Elder?) of Mercia	S 226
	Athelstan, 924–939	S 402

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Works on Anglo-Saxon kingship often take as their starting point the line from *Beowulf*: 'that was a good king'. This monograph, however, explores what it means to be a king, and how kings defined their own kingship in opposition to other powers. Kings derived their royal power from a divine source, which led to conflicts between the interpreters of the divine will (the episcopate) and the individual wielding power (the king). Demonstrating how Anglo-Saxon kings were able to manipulate political ideologies to increase their own authority, this book explores the unique way in which Anglo-Saxon kings understood the source and nature of their power, and of their own authority.

Kathrin McCann is the research funding manager at the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Germany, after having worked in the Humanities Division at the University of Oxford for several years.

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